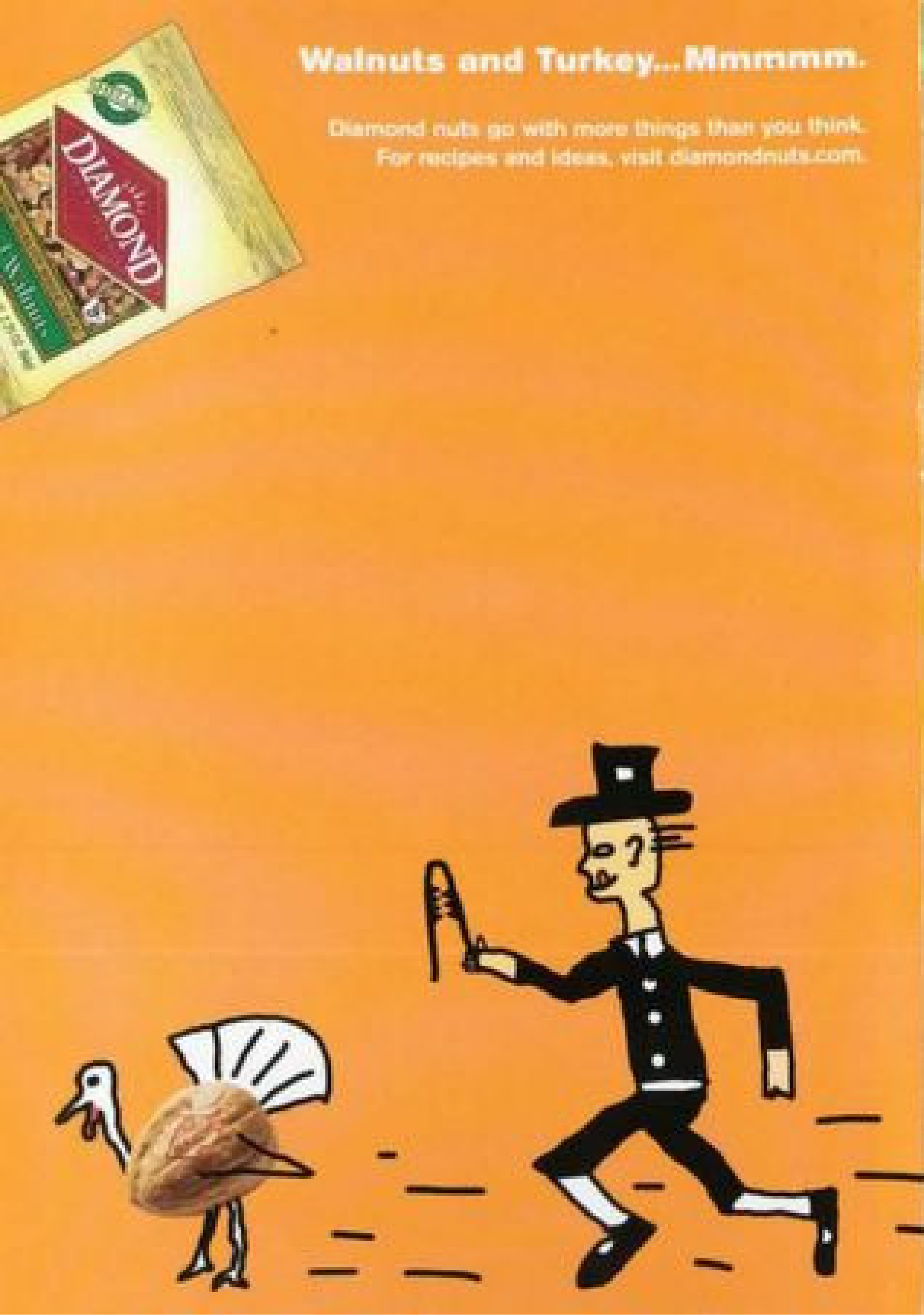



Create Delicious Holiday Memories
Taste of Home's
Best-Ever
Christmas
Cookies
& Candies
Photo of Every Recipe
76 Pull-Out Recipe Cards
RD SPECIALS

Taste of Home's

Best-Ever Christmas Cookies & Candies

SCRUMPTIOUS HOMEMADE cookies and candies really make the Christmas season extra special. For many, these wonderful treats bring back warm memories of holidays past, and they also create tasty times today to recall with pleasure for years to come.

This timeless treasury of family-favorite treats includes 38 fantastic cookies and 38 tempting candies. Every recipe has a photo so you can see what the treats look like when you make them, and each is on a handy pull-out recipe card. Supplied by the readers of *Taste of Home* magazine, these doable recipes are sure to make the season bright.

Whether you're making something for your family to enjoy, to share at a holiday gathering or to give as a gift, this book has a sleighful of mouth-watering ideas. So grab a copy, head to the kitchen and make some delightful Christmas memories today! Don't be surprised if recipe requests and compliments are as plentiful as snowflakes.

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On front cover: Roly-Poly Santas (p. 5), Lemon Nut Star Cookies (p. 9), Spritz Cookies (p. 31), Jeweled Thumbprint Cookies (p. 35) and Chocolate Mint Candy (p. 57).

Stained Glass Cutouts

Light up your holiday dessert tray with these heavenly confections! They're twice the treat, since they feature a hard candy "stained glass" in the middle of a crisp sugar cookie.
—Margaret Milleker
Baltimore, Maryland

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Peppermint Cookies

Some 40 years ago, I whipped up these minty morsels as a way to use leftover candy canes...and my daughter has enthusiastically anticipated the cookies for Christmas ever since! *—Mrs. Robert Nelson*
Des Moines, Iowa

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Stained Glass Cutouts

- **3/4 cup butter, softened**
- **1 cup sugar**
- **1 egg**
- **1 tablespoon milk**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt**
- **Assorted colors of clear hard candy**

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Beat in egg, milk and vanilla; mix well. Combine flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle. Meanwhile, coarsely crush each color of hard candy separately; set aside. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with 4-in. cookie cutters dipped in flour. Cut out centers with 1-in. cookie cutters. Place cookies 1 in. apart on lightly greased foil-lined baking sheets. Fill centers with crushed candy. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until candy is melted and edges begin to brown. Cool completely on baking sheet. Carefully peel cookies off the foil. **Yield:** about 3 dozen.

Peppermint Cookies

- **1 cup shortening**
- **1/2 cup sugar**
- **1/2 cup packed brown sugar**
- **2 eggs**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- **2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **1/2 teaspoon baking soda**
- **1/2 cup crushed peppermint candies**



In a mixing bowl, cream shortening and sugars. Add the eggs, one at time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the dry ingredients; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Stir in crushed candies. Shape into a 15-in. roll; wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm. Unwrap and cut into 1/8-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 6-8 minutes or unt[il] edges begin to brown. Remove to wir[e] racks to cool. **Yield:** about 6 dozen.

Roly-Poly Santas

I tuck one of these fanciful Santas into every gift cookie tray I make. They're a guaranteed hit with kids—young and old. I like that they're not too difficult to prepare.

—Mrs. Andrew Seyer
Oak Ridge, Missouri

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Gingerbread Cookies with Buttercream Icing

These holiday-spiced cookies are the first ones I make in December. The recipe came from my mother-in-law. If you like, tint the buttery icing a cheery pink or green.

—Ann Scherzer
Anacortes, Washington

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Roly-Poly Santas

1 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
Red paste food coloring
Miniature chocolate chips
FROSTING:
1/2 cup shortening
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2-1/3 cups confectioners' sugar, *divided*
2 tablespoons milk, *divided*

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add milk and vanilla; mix well. Add flour and mix well. Remove 1 cup dough; add red food coloring. Shape white dough into 12 balls, 3/4 in. each, and 48 balls, 1/4 in. each. Shape red dough into 12 balls, 1 in. each, and 60 balls, 1/2 in. each. Place the 1-in. red balls on two ungreased baking sheets for the body of 12 Santas; flatten to 1/2-in. thickness. Attach 3/4-in. white balls for heads; flatten to 1/2-in. thickness. Attach four 1/2-in. red balls to each Santa for arms and legs. Attach 1/4-in. white balls to ends of arms and legs for hands and feet. Shape remaining 1/2-in. red balls into hats (see the photo). Add chocolate chip eyes and buttons. Bake at 325° for 12-15 minutes or until set. Cool for 10 minutes; carefully remove from pans to wire racks (cookies will be fragile). For frosting, combine shortening and vanilla in a small mixing bowl; mix well. Gradually add 1-1/3 cups confectioners' sugar; add 1 tablespoon milk. Gradually add remaining sugar and milk. Fill a pastry bag with frosting. With a round decorator's tip, add a band of icing on hat, cuffs at hands and feet, and down the front and at bottom of jacket. Use a small star tip to pipe beard and pompom on hat. **Yield:** 1 dozen.

Editor's Note: Remaining dough may be shaped into balls and baked.

Gingerbread Cookies with Buttercream Icing

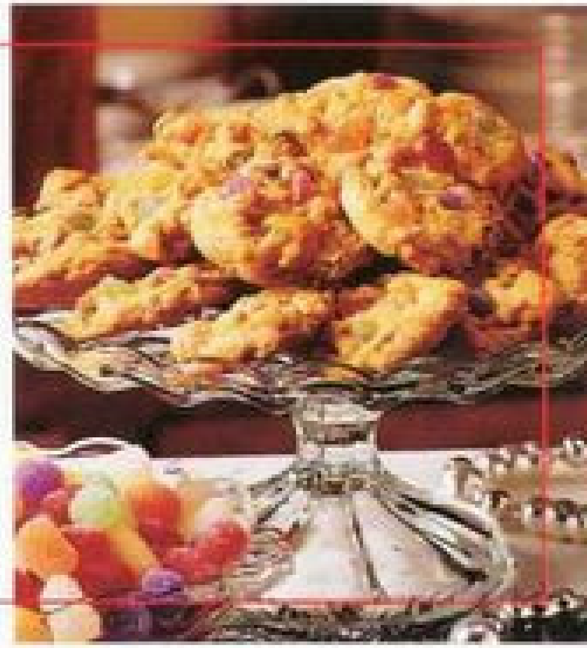
2/3 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup molasses
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon *each* ground cinnamon, cloves and ginger
ICING:
3 cups confectioners' sugar
1/3 cup butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon lemon extract
1/4 teaspoon butter flavoring
3 to 4 tablespoons milk

In a mixing bowl, cream shortening and sugar. Beat in egg and molasses. Combine flour, baking soda, salt and spices; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut into desired shapes. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Cool on a wire rack. For icing, beat sugar, butter and flavorings in a mixing bowl. Gradually stir in milk until smooth and thick. Frost cookies. **Yield:** about 3-1/2 dozen (2-1/2-inch cookies).

Holiday Gumdrop Cookies

These cookies were my mother's special treat each year at holiday time. Have children cut up the gumdrops and eat the black ones (they turn the dough gray). *—Letah Chilston Riverton, Wyoming*

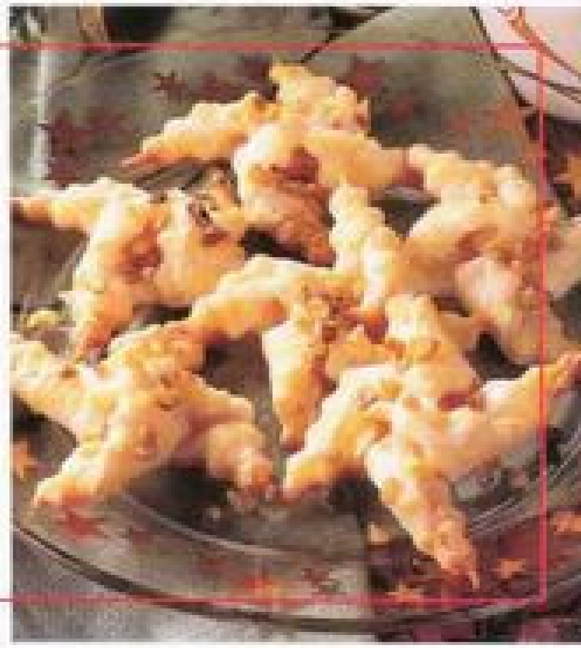
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Pineapple Star Cookies

I'm grateful my neighbor gave me this special recipe. When you see the cookies' pretty shape and savor the pineapple filling and sweet frosting, you'll know they're worth the effort. *—Sarah Lukaszewicz Batavia, New York*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Holiday Gumdrop Cookies

- 1-1/2 cups spice gumdrops
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour, *divided*
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt



Cut gumdrops into small pieces, reserving black ones for another use. Place gumdrops in a bowl. Add walnuts, raisins and 1/4 cup flour; toss to coat. Set aside. In a mixing bowl, cream brown sugar and shortening. Add egg; beat in buttermilk. Combine baking soda, salt and remaining flour; stir into creamed mixture. Add gumdrop mixture and mix well. Chill for 1 hour. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 400° for 8-10 minutes. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to a wire rack. **Yield:** about 3 dozen.

Pineapple Star Cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING:

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 4-1/2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, drained

FROSTING:

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

In a mixing bowl, cream the butter and cream cheese. Add flour and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle. Meanwhile, in a saucepan, combine sugar and flour; add pineapple. Cook over low heat until mixture is thickened, stirring frequently. Cover and refrigerate. Divide dough in half. On a lightly floured surface, roll out each portion to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut into 3-in. squares. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. To form star, make a 1-1/4-in. cut from each corner toward center (do not cut through center). Place 1/4 teaspoon of pineapple filling in the center of each. Fold every other point toward the center, overlapping pieces; press lightly to seal. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool. For frosting, combine the confectioners' sugar, butter, milk and vanilla until smooth. Drizzle over cookies; sprinkle with walnuts. **Yield:** 5 dozen.

Coffee Bonbons

When I first sampled this unique cookie, I decided it was the best cookie I'd ever tasted! The coffee flavor and chocolate icing make it a delightful treat at buffets and church socials.

—Leitzel Malzahn
Fox Point, Wisconsin

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Lemon Nut Star Cookies

Family and friends will say "Hooray!" when they see these beautiful star cookies with their unexpected lemon flavor. Make these treats throughout the year by using different cookie cutters and food coloring.

—Taste of Home's Test Kitchen

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Coffee Bonbons

- 1 cup butter
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon instant coffee granules
- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour

CHOCOLATE GLAZE:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 ounce unsweetened chocolate
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add vanilla. Combine coffee and flour; stir into creamed mixture and mix well. Chill. Shape into 3/4-in. balls and place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 18-20 minutes. For glaze, melt butter and chocolate in a saucepan. Stir in sugar alternately with milk; beat until smooth. Frost cookies while still warm. **Yield:** 5 dozen.

Lemon Nut Star Cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons half-and-half cream
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 3-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup ground almonds
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

GLAZE:

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

Food coloring, optional

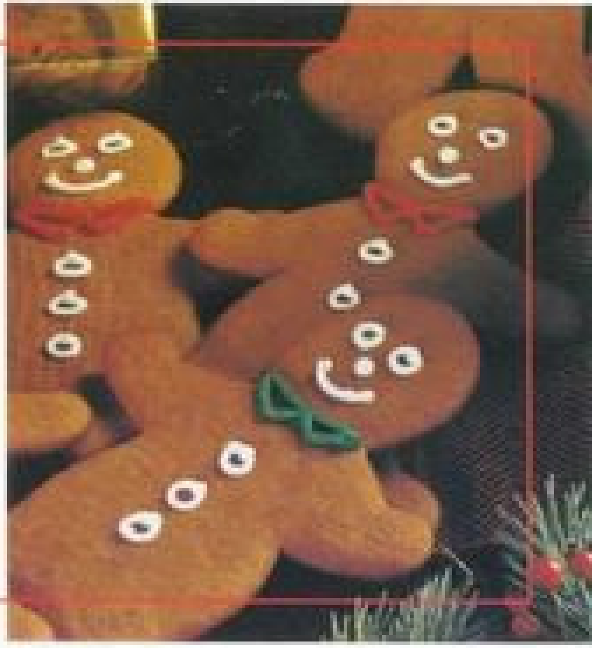
In a mixing bowl, cream butter and con fectioners' sugar. Add eggs, one at a time beating well after each addition. Beat i the lemon juice, cream and lemon peel Combine the flour, almonds, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mix ture. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours o until easy to handle. On a lightly floure surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thicknes Cut with a floured star-shaped cooki cutter. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased ba ing sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minut or until lightly browned. Remove to wi racks to cool. For glaze, combine conf tioners' sugar, corn syrup and lemon ju until smooth. Tint with food coloring if d sired. Spread over cookies; let sta overnight for glaze to harden. **Yield:** abo 5-1/2 dozen.

Frieda's Molasses Cookies

During the 1930s and 1940s, neighborhood children would stop on their way home from school to sample my mother's cookies. Dunked in a glass of cold milk, they were a snack that was hard to beat!

—Nina Sanders
Daly City, California

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



White Chocolate Cookies

Fixing desserts is my favorite kind of cooking. I usually make these cookies for Christmas—their pale-white color adds a special touch to all the reds and greens. *—Shana Bounds*
Magee, Mississippi

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Frieda's Molasses Cookies

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup light molasses
- 1/3 cup boiling water
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



In a large bowl, cream sugar and shortening. Add molasses, water and vinegar. Combine flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and salt; beat into creamed mixture. Cover and chill for 3 hours. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with a 2-1/2-in. cookie cutter dipped in flour. Place on greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Do not overbake. **Yield:** 6-7 dozen.

White Chocolate Cookies

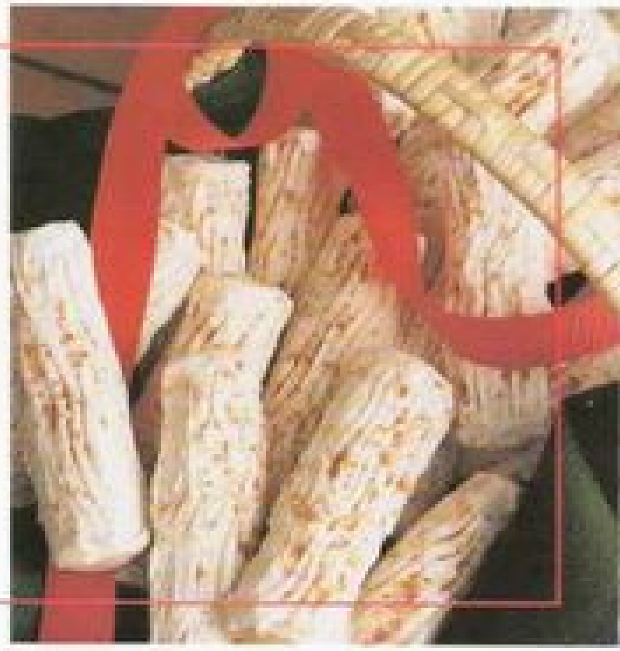
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 10 ounces white chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped macadamia nuts, lightly toasted

In a large mixing bowl, cream butte and shortening. Gradually add sug ars, beating until light and fluffy. Ad egg; mix well. Combine flour, bakin soda and salt; add to creamed mi ture. Blend in vanilla. Stir in choc late and nuts. Cover and chill dou for 1 hour. Drop by heaping tab spoonfuls about 3 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 350° for 12-14 minutes or until lig ly browned. Let stand a few minu before removing cookies to a w rack to cool. **Yield:** about 2- 2 dozen.

Eggnog Logs

An older lady at church gave me this recipe. I always include these logs in holiday food gifts to family and friends. *—Kim Jordan Dunsmuir, California*

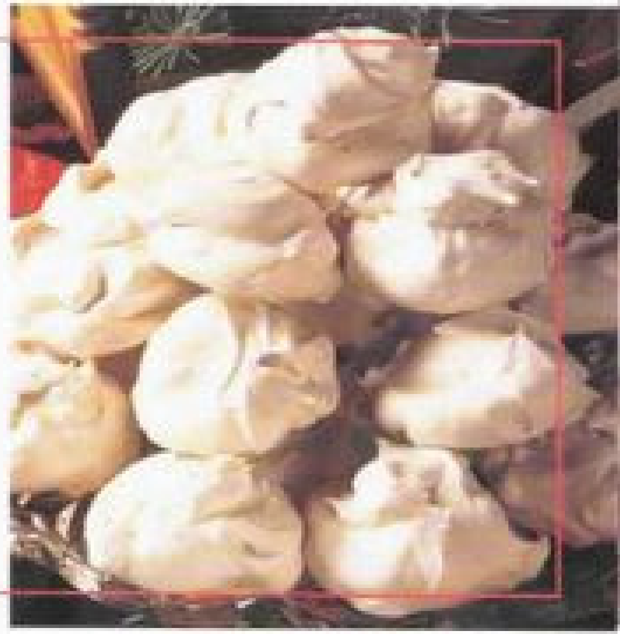
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Pecan Puffs

I just had to share my mom's recipe for these drop cookies. The light-as-a-cloud taste is simply heavenly. *—Leslie Link-Terry Greendale, Wisconsin*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Eggnog Logs

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1-1/4 teaspoons ground nutmeg
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon rum extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour

FROSTING:

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3 cups confectioners' sugar, *divided*
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon rum extract
- 2 tablespoons half-and-half cream
- Ground nutmeg

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add the nutmeg, egg and extracts; mix thoroughly. Stir in flour. Cover and chill dough until easy to handle.On a lightly floured surface, shape dough into 1/2-in.-diameter rolls; cut each into 3-in.-long pieces. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire racks. For frosting, cream butter until light and fluffy. Add 2 cups sugar and extracts; mix well. Beat in cream and remaining sugar. Frost cookies. With tines of a small fork, make lines down the frosting to simulate bark. Sprinkle with nutmeg. **Yield:** 4-1/2 dozen.

Pecan Puffs

- 3 egg whites
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped pecans



In a mixing bowl, beat egg white[s] and salt until soft peaks form. Grad-ually add sugar, beating until sti[ff] peaks form, about 5-8 minutes. Fo[ld] in vanilla and pecans. Drop by we[ll]-rounded teaspoonfuls onto greas[ed] baking sheets. Bake at 200° for 5[0]-55 minutes or until firm to the tou[ch]. Store in an airtight container. Yie[ld:] 3 dozen.

Chocolate Shortbread

Everyone who tastes this comments it's a different way to dress up an old-time favorite.

—Katherine Both
Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

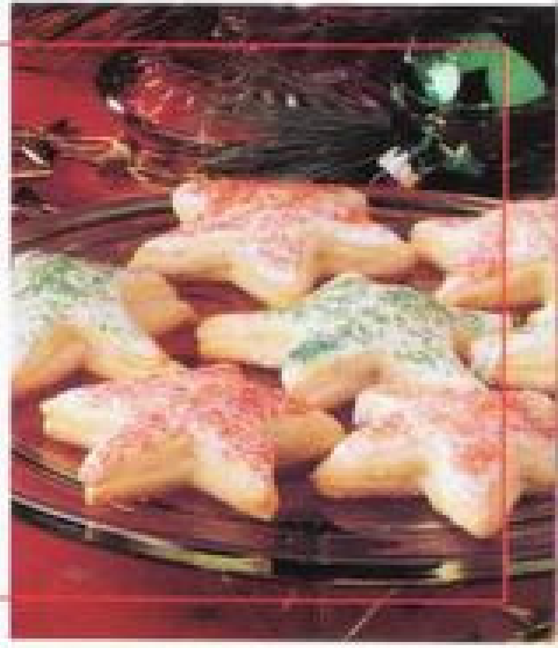


Surprise Sugar Stars

Come holiday time, I roll out dozens of these buttery cutout cookies in my country kitchen. The basic sugar cookie recipe is my mother's and I came up with the sweet "surprise" inside.

—Joyce Berry
Sandpoint, Idaho

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Chocolate Shortbread

1 cup butter, softened
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
2/3 cup confectioners' sugar
Dash salt
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour



In a large mixing bowl, cream butter until light and fluffy. Blend in remaining ingredients. Chill 1 hour. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 in. apart on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 300° for about 20 minutes or until the cookies are set. **Yield:** about 4 dozen.

Surprise Sugar Stars

1 cup butter, softened
1-1/4 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup buttermilk
1 can (21 ounces) cherry pie filling

ICING:
2 cups confectioners' sugar
2 to 3 tablespoons milk
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
Colored sugar, optional

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in vanilla. Combine the dry ingredients; add to the creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours or until easy to handle. On a floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with 2-in. star cookie cutter or the cutter of your choice. Place half of the stars on ungreased baking sheets. Spoon 1-1/2 teaspoonfuls of pie filling into the center of each. Top with remaining stars. Pinch edges to seal; cut a small slit in top of each cookie. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire racks. For icing, combine confectioners' sugar, milk and extract in a bowl; whisk until smooth. Spread over cookies. Sprinkle with colored sugar if desired. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Strawberry-Nut Pinwheel Cookies

All the "cookie monsters" I know love these treats. I enjoy the cookies because they're easy to roll up, cut and bake. The strawberry-walnut filling is very tasty!

—Ruth Gillmore
Alden, New York

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Molasses Spice Cutouts

It hardly ever failed—when I used to send these cookies to school with our youngsters, I was almost always asked for the recipe by their teachers!

—Doris Heinen
St. Cloud, Minnesota

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Strawberry-Nut Pinwheel Cookies

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup strawberry jam
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add egg and vanilla; mix well. Combine flour and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 14-in. x 10-in. rectangle. Spread jam to within 1/2 in. of edges. Sprinkle nuts over jam. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight. Unwrap and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Molasses Spice Cutouts

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 cup light molasses
- 1/2 cup cold coffee
- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

ICING (optional):

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 3/4 cup cold water
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Colored sugar or nonpareils
Decorator icing, optional

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar; beat in molasses and coffee. Combine flour, baking soda, salt and spices; add to molasses mixture and mix well. Chill dough 1-2 hours or until easy to handle. If needed, add a little additional flour before rolling. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to a 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with holiday cutters dipped in flour. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes. Cool on wire racks. For icing, if desired, combine gelatin and water in a small saucepan. Let stand for 5 minutes to soften. Add granulated sugar. Heat and stir over low heat until the gelatin and sugar dissolve. Transfer to a mixing bowl. Add confectioners' sugar; beat until foamy. Add baking powder and vanilla; beat until very thick, about 10 minutes. Frost cookies by inverting them and quickly swirling the tops in the icing; decorate with colored sugar or nonpareils. For traditional gingerbread men, use decorator icing to add features as desired. **Yield:** about 7-8 dozen (2-1/2-in. cookies).

Holly Wreaths

I've never come across another spritz cookie like this—one calling for cream cheese as an ingredient. That helps to keep these wreaths moist a long time, while also adding a delicious flavor. *—Dee Lien, Longmont, Colorado*

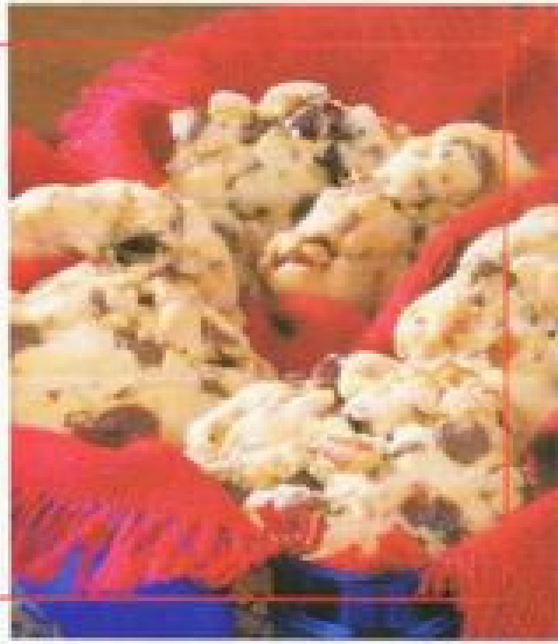
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Cranberry Chip Cookies

Chock-full of chocolate chips, cranberries and nuts, these cookies are fun to eat. They offer a change of pace from traditional Christmas cookies...but don't wait until December to make them. My family requests them all year-round. *—Betty Albee, Buhl, Idaho*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Holly Wreaths

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Green cherries, cut into thin slices
- Cinnamon red-hot candies
- Frosting and decorator gel



In a mixing bowl, cream butter and cream cheese. Add sugar; blend well. Stir in vanilla. Gradually beat in flour. Using a cookie press fitted with star tip, form dough into 2-1/2-in. wreaths on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until set but not brown. Cool on wire racks. Decorate wreaths with green cherry "leaves" and cinnamon candy "berries" attached with a drop of frosting. Add bows with decorator gel. **Yield:** about 3 dozen.

Cranberry Chip Cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 cups (9 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1-1/2 cups dried cranberries
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup English toffee bits *or* almond brickle chips, optional

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla; mi well. Combine the flour, bakin powder and salt; gradually add t the creamed mixture and mix we Stir in chocolate chips, cranberrie pecans and toffee bits if desir (dough will be stiff). Drop by roun ed tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart o ungreased baking sheets. Flatt slightly. Bake at 350° for 11-14 m utes or until set and edges lightly browned. Cool for 2 minu before removing to wire ra **Yield:** about 6 dozen.

Dipped Peanut Butter Cookies

Baking mix makes these soft, moist cookies a snap to stir up for parties year-round. I sometimes prepare the dough the day before and chill it until I have time to bake the cookies.

—Stephanie DeLoach
Magnolia, Arkansas

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Vanilla-Butter Sugar Cookies

While I usually bake these cookies for Christmas, I'll also make them at Valentine's Day (in the shape of hearts, with messages written in frosting), Thanksgiving (shaped like turkeys) and Halloween (pumpkins). Children like to help out with the decorating!

—Cindy Ettel
Hutchinson, Minnesota

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Dipped Peanut Butter Cookies

1 cup peanut butter
1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups biscuit/baking mix
3/4 to 1 pound milk chocolate candy coating
1 tablespoon shortening



In a mixing bowl, combine peanut butter, milk, egg and vanilla; beat until smooth. Stir in biscuit mix; mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Shape into 1-in. balls and place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Flatten each ball with the bottom of a glass. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire racks. In a small saucepan over low heat, melt candy coating and shortening. Dip each cookie halfway into chocolate; shake off excess. Place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets to harden. **Yield:** about 5 dozen.

Vanilla-Butter Sugar Cookies

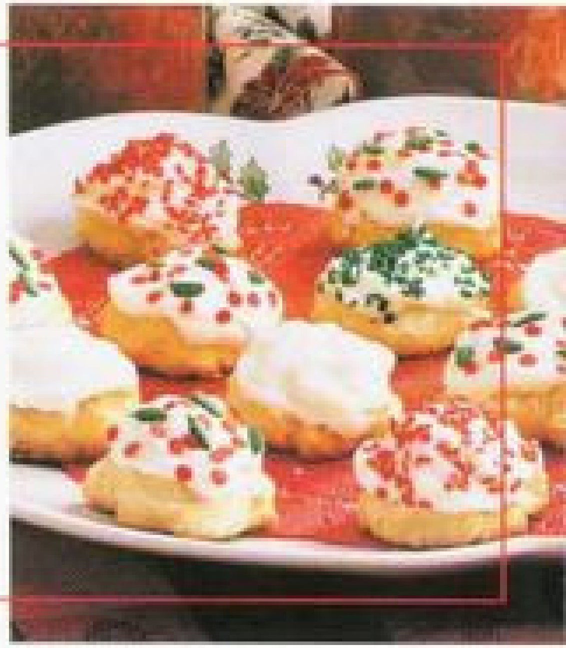
1-1/2 cups butter, softened
1-1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs
2 tablespoons vanilla extract
4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
FROSTING:
3 tablespoons butter, softened
1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon milk
Food coloring, optional
Colored sugar

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla; beat well. Stir together dry ingredients; gradually add to creamed mixture until completely blended. Chill for 30 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to a 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with 2-1/2-in. cookie cutters dipped in flour. Using a floured spatula, transfer cookies to ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes. Cool on wire racks. For frosting, cream butter and sugar. Stir in vanilla and milk. If necessary, thin with additional milk to desired spreading consistency. Add a few drops of food coloring if desired. Spread frosting over cookies and decorate with colored sugar. **Yield:** 7 dozen.

Italian Christmas Cookies

A single batch of these mouth-watering cookies is never enough. I usually make one to give away and two more to keep at home. Ricotta cheese in the batter makes the morsels moist. *—Doris Marshall*
Strasburg, Pennsylvania

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Finnish Pinwheels

Once when my sister was hosting an exchange student from Finland, I served a plate of these cookies. The young lady instantly recognized what they were. So I know they're still being made in our ancestor's country! *—Ilona Barron*
Ontonagon, Michigan

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Italian Christmas Cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 carton (15 ounces) ricotta cheese
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

FROSTING:

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3 to 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 to 4 tablespoons milk
- Colored sprinkles

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in ricotta and vanilla. Combine flour, salt and baking soda; gradually add to creamed mixture. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Stir in vanilla. Add enough milk until frosting reaches spreading consistency. Frost cooled cookies and immediately decorate with sprinkles. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 8-1/2 dozen.

Finnish Pinwheels

FILLING:

- 1/2 pound pitted prunes, chopped
- 1/2 pound pitted dates, chopped
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter

PASTRY:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cold butter
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3 tablespoons cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

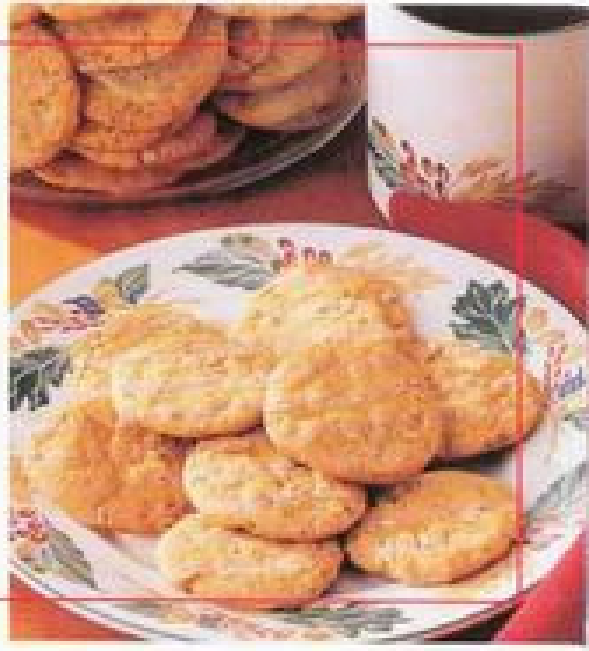
In a saucepan, combine prunes, dates, water and sugar. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in butter. Cool. In a mixing bowl, sift together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in butter. Blend in egg, cream and vanilla. Form into two balls. Place one ball at a time on a floured board and roll to a 1/8-in. thickness. Cut into 2-in. squares. Place on ungreased cookie sheets. Make 1-in. slits in corners. Place 1/2 teaspoon filling into center of each square. Bring every other corner up to the center to form a pinwheel and press lightly. Repeat with remaining dough and filling. Bake at 325° for [illegible] minutes or until the points are light golden brown. **Yield:** about 7 dozen.

Holiday Peppernuts

We have many pecan trees in this part of the country, so I like to make recipes with the nuts. I usually make these cookies during the holidays.

—Chandra Koehn
Rich Hill, Missouri

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

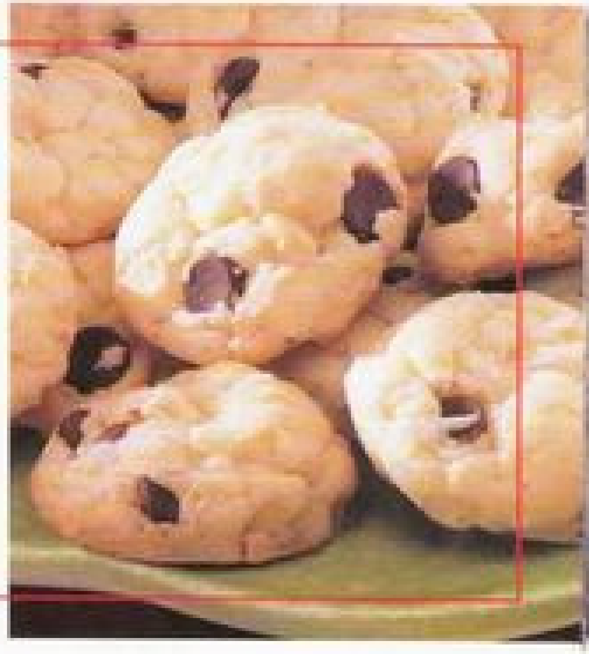


Coconut Chip Cookies

I transform a boxed white cake mix into a big batch of these tasty cookies that are filled with coconut, nuts and chocolate chips.

—Flora Alers
Clinton, Maryland

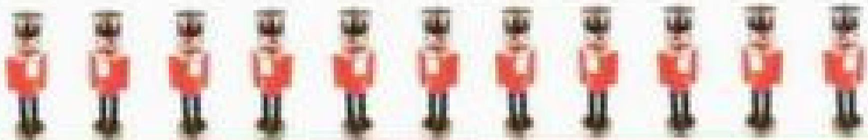
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Holiday Peppernuts

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 4 cups packed brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 teaspoon anise extract
- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/2 teaspoon *each* ground allspice, cinnamon, cloves and ginger
- 3 cups finely chopped pecans

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and brown sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add extract. Combine dry ingredients; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Add pecans; mix well. Shape dough into four 15-in. rolls; wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight. Cut rolls into 1/4-in.-thick slices. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 7-8 minutes or until golden brown. **Yield:** 20 dozen.



Coconut Chip Cookies

- 1 package (18-1/4 ounces) white cake mix
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup chopped macadamia nuts or almonds

In a mixing bowl, beat dry cake mix, eggs and oil (batter will be very stiff). Stir in coconut, chips and nuts. Roll into 1-in. balls. Place on lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until a slight indentation remains when lightly touched. Cool for 2 minutes; remove to a wire rack to cool completely. **Yield:** 3-1/2 dozen.



Chocolate Mint Cookies

My dad sandwiches mint patties between two tender chocolate cookies to create these chewy treats. The blend of chocolate and mint is a big hit at our house.

—Christina Burbage
Spartanburg, South Carolina

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

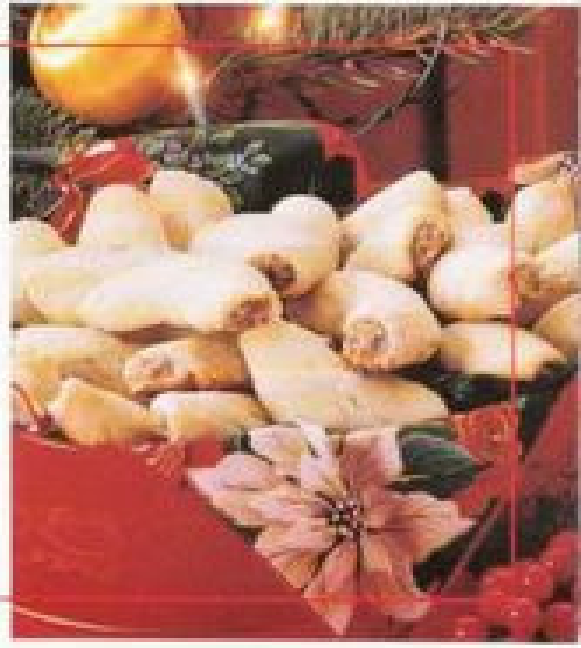


Walnut Horn Cookies

At our house, it wouldn't be Christmas without these Pennsylvania Dutch cookies that are known locally as "kiflets".

—Sharon Allen
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Chocolate Mint Cookies

- 1-1/4 cups butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 32 round thin chocolate-covered mint patties



In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture, beating until well combined. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-9 minutes or until puffy and tops are cracked. Invert half of the cookies onto wire racks. Immediately place a mint patty on each, then top with remaining cookies. Press lightly to seal. Cool completely. **Yield:** 32 sandwich cookies.

Walnut Horn Cookies

- 1 pound butter, softened
- 2 packages (one 8 ounces, one 3 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 4 egg yolks
- 4-1/4 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING:

- 4 cups ground walnuts (about 1 pound)
- 5-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar, *divided*
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract

In a mixing bowl, combine butter, cream cheese, egg yolks and flour; beat until smooth. Shape into 1-in. balls; place in a container with waxed paper separating each layer. Cover and refrigerate overnight. For filling, combine walnuts and 3-3/4 cups sugar (the mixture will be dry). In a small mixing bowl, beat egg whites until soft peaks form; fold into nut mixture. Add extracts and a few drops of water if necessary until filling reaches a spreading consistency. Place remaining sugar in a bowl; roll cream cheese balls in sugar until completely covered. Place a few balls at a time between two sheets of waxed paper. Roll balls into 2-1/2-in. circles. Gently spread about 2 teaspoons of filling over each. Roll up; place seam side down on ungreased baking sheets. Curve the ends slightly. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire racks. **Yield:** about 8 dozen.

Licorice Cookie Strips

If you like the flavor of licorice, you'll love these crispy cookies. When our six children were young, I often made them for lunches or after-school snacks. Flattening the dough logs with a fork gives them a pretty look. Once they're baked, it's a breeze to cut them into strips.

—Dolores Hurtt
Florence, Montana

Taste of Home's **Cookies & Candies**



Surprise Package Cookies

Each of these buttery cookies has a chocolate mint candy inside. They're my very favorite cookie and are always part of our Christmas cookie trays.

—Loraine Meyer
Bend, Oregon

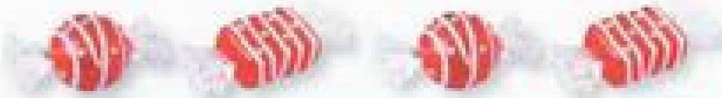
Taste of Home's **Cookies & Candies**



Licorice Cookie Strips

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons aniseed
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugars. Beat in egg. Combine dry ingredients; add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in nuts. Divide dough into 10 portions; shape each into a 12-in. log. Place 3 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Flatten with a fork to 1/4-in. thickness. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 5 minutes; cut diagonally into 1-in. slices. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. **Yield:** about 8 dozen.



Surprise Package Cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 65 mint Andes candies

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle. With floured hands, shape a tablespoonful of dough around 42 candies, forming rectangular cookies. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Remove to wire racks to cool. In a microwave or saucepan, melt the remaining candies; drizzle over cookies. **Yield:** 3-1/2 dozen.

Nutmeg Meltaways

My family and friends have enjoyed these melt-in-your-mouth cookies since I first began making them years ago. I love to bake and try to keep the cookie jar filled. For the holidays, the dusting of nutmeg is a tasty touch. *—Judy Burdette, Kettering, Ohio*

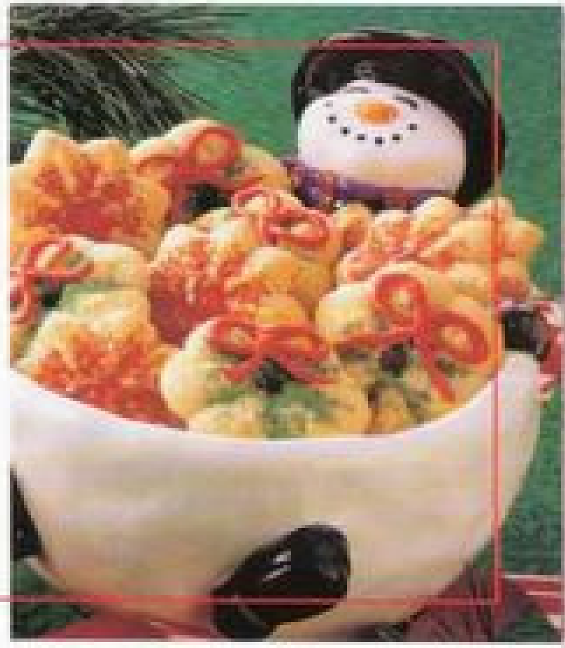
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Spritz Cookies

These almond-flavored cookies are great for holiday bake sales. They can be left plain or decorated with colored sugar and frosting. *—Tanya Hart, Muncie, Indiana*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Nutmeg Meltaways

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup ground almonds (about 3 ounces), toasted
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground nutmeg



In a mixing bowl, cream butter, sugar and vanilla. Gradually add flour; mix well. Stir in almonds. Shape into 1-in. balls; place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 300° for 18-20 minutes or until bottoms are lightly browned. Cool on wire racks. Combine confectioners' sugar and nutmeg. Gently roll cooled cookies in sugar mixture. **Yield:** about 5 dozen.

Spritz Cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Green and red colored sugar, chopped candied cherries and red frosting, optional

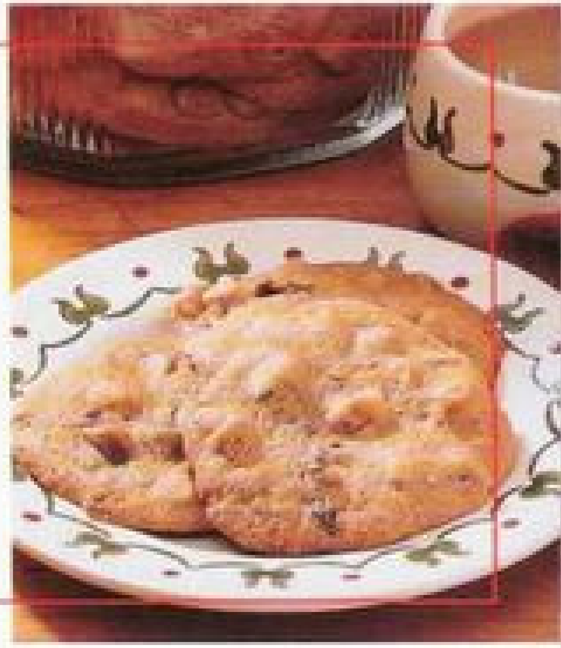


In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugars. Beat in egg and extracts. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Using a cookie press fitted with the disk of your choice, press dough 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Sprinkle with colored sugar if desired. Bake at 375° for 7-9 minutes or until edges just begin to brown. Immediately add cherries if desired, lightly pressing onto cookies. Cool on wire racks. Decorate with frosting if desired. **Yield:** about 7 dozen.

Soft Mincemeat Cookies

We call these "Santa's cookies" because they're what we put out for Santa instead of the usual decorated Christmas cutouts. These cookies are a traditional part of my holiday baking. *—Evelyn Wadey, Blackfalds, Alberta*

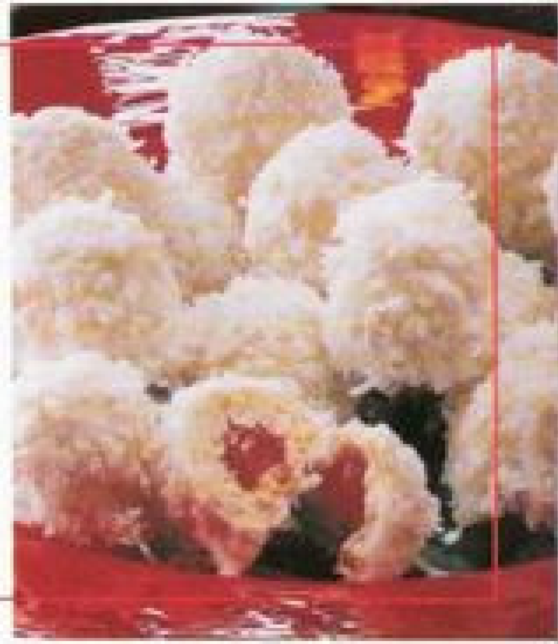
Taste of Home's **Cookies & Candies**



Cherry Snowballs

A juicy maraschino cherry is the pleasant surprise tucked inside these unique cookies. My mother clipped this recipe out of the newspaper more than 30 years ago. *—Evy Adams, West Seneca, New York*

Taste of Home's **Cookies & Candies**



Soft Mincemeat Cookies

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup mincemeat
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 cups (9 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, optional

In a mixing bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar. Add eggs and mincemeat; mix well. Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt; add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Fold in chocolate chips and walnuts if desired. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire racks. **Yield:** about 4 dozen.



Cherry Snowballs

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 36 maraschino cherries, well drained

COATING:

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup milk
- 2 cups flaked coconut, finely chopped

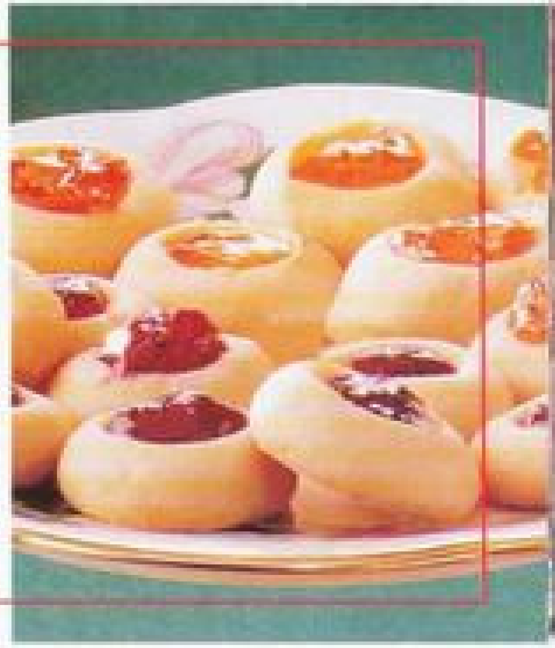
In a mixing bowl, cream butter, sugar, water and vanilla. Combine flour, oats and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Shape a tablespoonful of dough around each cherry, forming a ball. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 18-20 minutes or until bottoms are browned. Remove to wire racks to cool. Combine sugar and enough milk to achieve smooth dipping consistency. Dip cookies, then roll in coconut. **Yield:** 3 dozen.

Jeweled Thumbprints

When I moved here from Malta more than 20 years ago, a kind neighbor lady took me under her wing and baked many cookies for me. This is one of her recipes that I treasure.

—Maria Debono
New York, New York

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

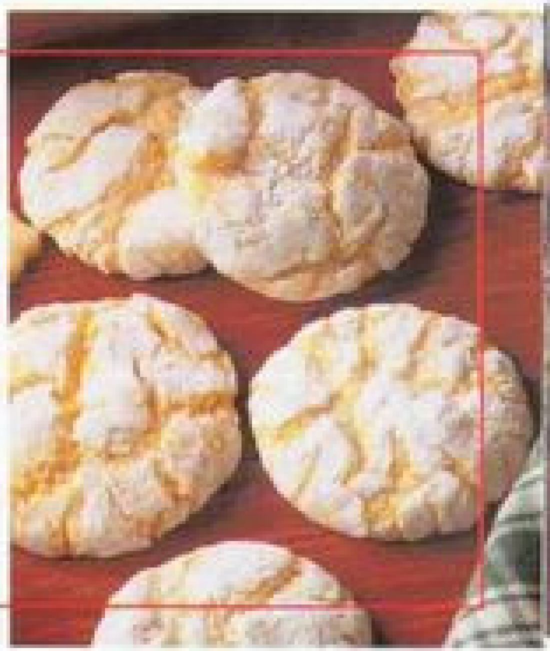


Lemon Snowflakes

These scrumptious cookies get a head start with a convenient lemon cake mix. I can whip up a batch in a hurry.

—Linda Barry
Dianna, Texas

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Jeweled Thumbprints

3/4 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
1 egg yolk
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup raspberry *or* apricot preserves



In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Beat in egg yolk and extract. Gradually add flour. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle. Roll into 3/4-in. balls. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Using the end of a wooden spoon handle, make an indentation in the center of each ball. Bake at 350° for 12-14 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool. Fill with preserves. **Yield:** 6 dozen.

Lemon Snowflakes

1 package (18-1/4 ounces) lemon cake mix with pudding
2-1/4 cups whipped topping
1 egg
Confectioners' sugar



In a mixing bowl, combine cake mix, whipped topping and egg. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until blended. (Batter will be very sticky.) Drop by teaspoonfuls into confectioners' sugar; roll lightly to coat. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned. **Yield:** 5-6 dozen.

Crisp Butter Cookies

You'll be out of the kitchen quickly when you bake these melt-in-your-mouth morsels.

—Tammy Mackie
Seward, Nebraska

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

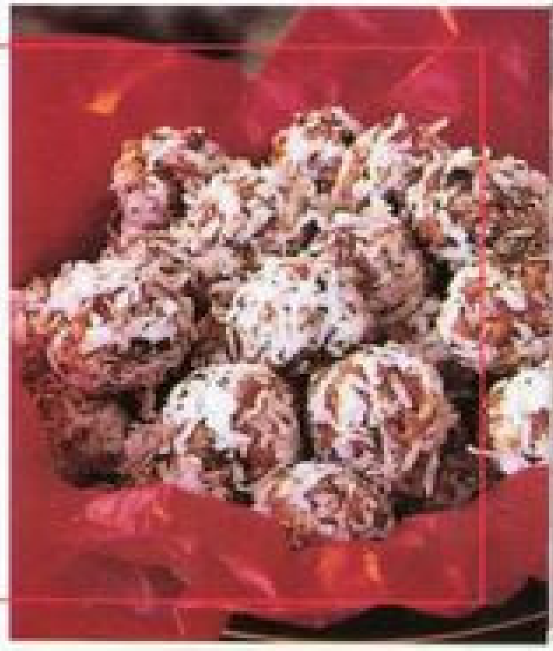


Fruitcake Cookies

These no-bake cookies have wonderful flavors of the season, like nuts, fruits and coconut. They're a traditional Christmas treat for my family.

—Hazel Staley
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Crisp Butter Cookies

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 5 egg yolks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Colored sugar



In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Blend in egg yolks. Add flour, 1 cup at a time, beating well after each addition. (Dough will be very stiff.) On a heavily floured surface, roll out dough to a 1/8-in. thickness. Using a pastry wheel or knife, cut into 2-1/2-in. squares, rectangles or diamonds. Place 1/2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Sprinkle with colored sugar. Bake at 375° for 7-8 minutes or until lightly browned. **Yield:** 6 dozen.

Fruitcake Cookies

- 6 cups chopped pecans (about 1-1/2 pounds)
- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1-1/2 cups raisins
- 1-1/4 cups chopped candied cherries (about 1/2 pound)
- 1-1/4 cups chopped candied pineapple (about 1/2 pound)
- 4-1/2 cups miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1-1/2 cups flaked coconut

In a large bowl, combine pecans, cracker crumbs, raisins, cherries and pineapple. In a large saucepan, combine marshmallows, milk and butter. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until melted. Pour over pecan mixture and mix well. Shape into 1-in. balls and roll in the coconut, washing your hands frequently. **Yield:** 7-8 dozen.



Christmas Sandwich Cookies

My mother-in-law gave me the recipe for these tender extra-special cookies. They're a Christmas tradition at our house. —*Elizabeth Klager*
St. Catharines, Ontario

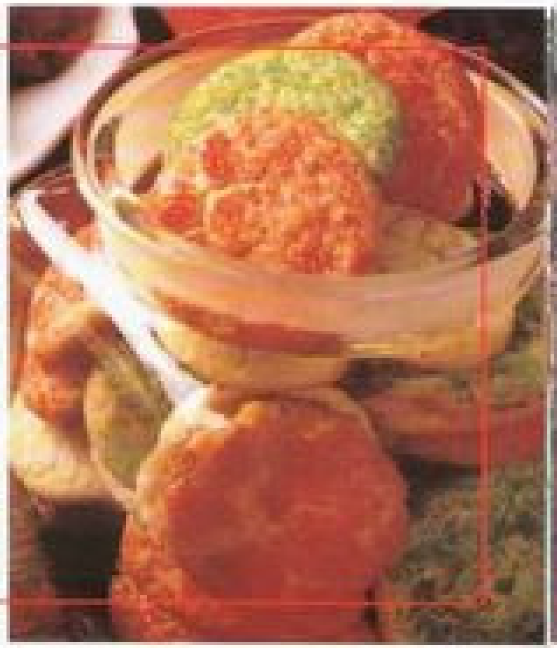
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Angel Sugar Crisps

Whenever I've taken these to church coffees, I've had women come into the kitchen and request the recipe. You'll enjoy the secret ingredient—brown sugar. —*Annabel Cox*
Olivet, South Dakota

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Christmas Sandwich Cookies

1 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons milk
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup cornstarch
1/8 teaspoon salt
FILLING:
5 tablespoons raspberry jam
FROSTING:
1/4 cup butter, softened
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Green food coloring
Red candied cherries and colored sprinkles

In a mixing bowl, cream butter, confectioners' sugar and milk. Combine flour, cornstarch and salt; add to the creamed mixture, beating just until dough forms a ball. On a lightly floured surface, knead 20 times. Roll out to 3/8-in. thickness. Cut with a 2-in. round cookie cutter. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-13 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool. Spread jam over the bottom of half of the cookies; top with remaining cookies. In a mixing bowl, cream butter, confectioners' sugar, vanilla and food coloring. Pipe frosting in tree shapes or other decorations on cookies. Garnish with candied cherries and sprinkles. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

Angel Sugar Crisps

1/2 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup shortening
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/2 teaspoon salt
Water
Additional white *or* colored sugar

In a mixing bowl, cream butter, shortening, sugars, egg and vanilla until light and fluffy. Sift together flour, soda, cream of tartar and salt. Add to creamed mixture; mix until blended. Shape into large marble-size balls. Dip half of ball into water, then in sugar. Place, sugared side up, on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 400° for 6 minutes or until done. Cool. **Yield:** 4 dozen.



Orange Taffy

This taffy has a satisfying tang that hits the tongue just before the sweetness. My mother-in-law gave me the recipe years ago. It takes time to wrap all the little candies, but the kids can help. It's a great way to involve them in the kitchen.

—Christine Olson
Horse Creek, California

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

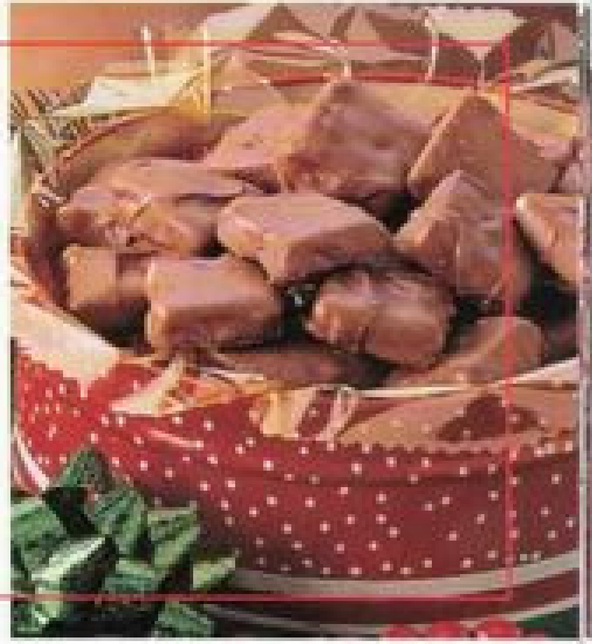


English Toffee Bars

My mom and I get together every year at Christmastime to make this delicious chocolate-coated toffee. It's a tradition I plan to continue with my daughters and grandchildren. Our families and friends wait impatiently for their packages.

—Dianne Brooks
Augusta, Kansas

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Orange Taffy

2 cups sugar
2 cups light corn syrup
1 can (6 ounces) frozen orange juice concentrate, undiluted
Pinch salt
1 cup half-and-half cream
1/2 cup butter

In a heavy saucepan, combine first four ingredients. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to a rapid boil and cook until a candy thermometer reads 245° (firm-ball stage). Add cream and butter; heat and stir until mixture reaches 245° again. Pour into a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan; cool. When cool enough to handle, roll into 1-1/2-in. logs or 1-in. balls. Wrap individually in foil or waxed paper; twist ends. **Yield:** about 6 dozen.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

English Toffee Bars

1 tablespoon plus 1-3/4 cups butter, softened, *divided*
2 cups sugar
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
1 cup chopped pecans
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 pound milk chocolate candy coating

Butter a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan with 1 tablespoon butter; set aside. In a heavy 3-qt. saucepan, melt the remaining butter. Add sugar and corn syrup; cook and stir over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 295° (soft-crack stage). Remove from the heat; stir in pecans and salt. Quickly pour into prepared pan. Let stand for 5 minutes. Using a sharp knife, score into squares; cut along scored lines. Let stand at room temperature until cool. Separate into squares, using a sharp knife if necessary. In a microwave or heavy saucepan, melt candy coating, stirring often. Dip squares, one at a time, in coating. Place on waxed paper until set. **Yield:** 2-1/4 pounds.

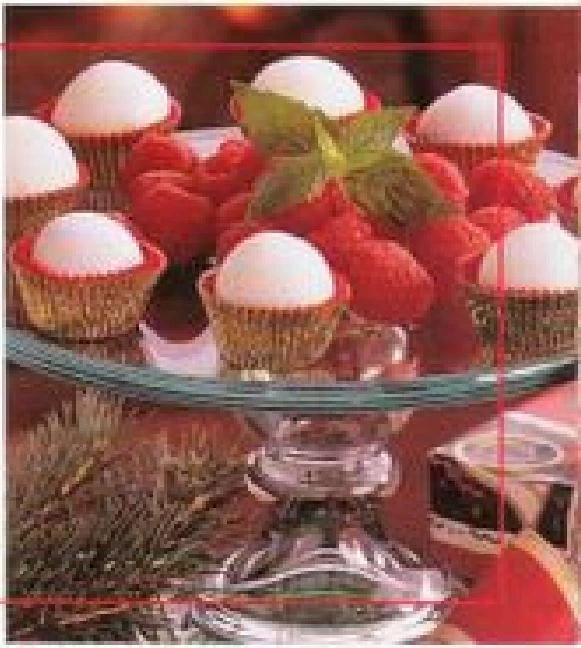
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Raspberry Truffles

Christmas is my favorite time of year. I make many cookies, cakes and candies—including this easy but elegant recipe—to give to relatives and friends. The aroma of the chocolate and raspberry is heavenly when you're making these truffles.

—Helen Vail
Glenside, Pennsylvania

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Perfect Peppermint Patties

Calling for just a few ingredients, this is one candy that's simple to prepare. I make lots of different candies at Christmas to give as gifts. I love to see the delight it brings to people.

—Joanne Adams
Bath, Maine

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Raspberry Truffles

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
- 1-1/3 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 7-1/2 teaspoons seedless raspberry jam
- 6 ounces white or dark chocolate candy coating
- 2 tablespoons shortening

In a heavy saucepan, combine butter, cream and chocolate chips. Cook over low heat for 4-5 minutes or until chocolate is melted. Remove from the heat; stir in jam until combined. Transfer to a small freezer container; cover and freeze for 20 minutes. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a foil-lined baking sheet. Freeze for 15 minutes. Roll into balls; freeze until very firm. In a microwave or heavy saucepan, melt candy coating and shortening, stirring often. Cool slightly; spoon over balls. Place on a wire rack over waxed paper. Let stand for 15 minutes or until firm. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Perfect Peppermint Patties

- 1 package (1 pound) confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 to 3 teaspoons peppermint extract
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening

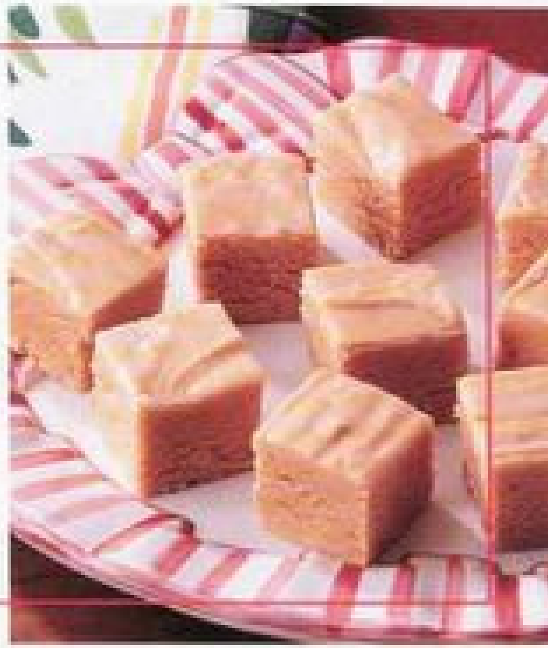
In a bowl, combine first four ingredients. Add milk and mix well. Roll into 1-in. balls and place on a waxed paper-lined cookie sheet. Flatten with a glass to 1/4 in. Cover and freeze for 30 minutes. In a double boiler or microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate chips and shortening. Dip patties; place on waxed paper to harden. **Yield:** about 5 dozen.

Peanut Butter Fudge

My sister shared the recipe for this unbelievably easy confection. I like using creamy peanut butter for the mouth-watering fudge, but the chunky style works just as well.

—Mrs. Kenneth Rummel
Linglestown, Pennsylvania

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



S'more Clusters

Our two sons love to help me break up the chocolate and graham crackers for these tasty treats—that way, they can tell their friends they made them! The chocolaty clusters taste just like s'mores, but without the gooey mess. It's difficult to eat just one.

—Kathy Schmittler
Sterling Heights, Michigan

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Peanut Butter Fudge

- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1-1/3 cups peanut butter
- 1 jar (7 ounces) marshmallow creme

In a saucepan, bring sugar and milk to a boil; boil for 3 minutes. Add peanut butter and marshmallow creme; mix well. Quickly pour into a buttered 8-in. square pan; chill until set. Cut into squares. **Yield:** 3-4 dozen.



S'more Clusters

- 6 milk chocolate candy bars (1.55 ounces *each*), broken into pieces
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- 8 whole graham crackers, broken into bite-size pieces

In a large microwave-safe bowl, toss chocolate and oil. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% power for 1-1/2 to 2 minutes or until chocolate is melted, stirring once. Stir in marshmallows and graham crackers. Spoon into paper-lined muffin cups (about 1/3 cup each). Refrigerate for 1 hour or until firm. **Yield:** 1 dozen.

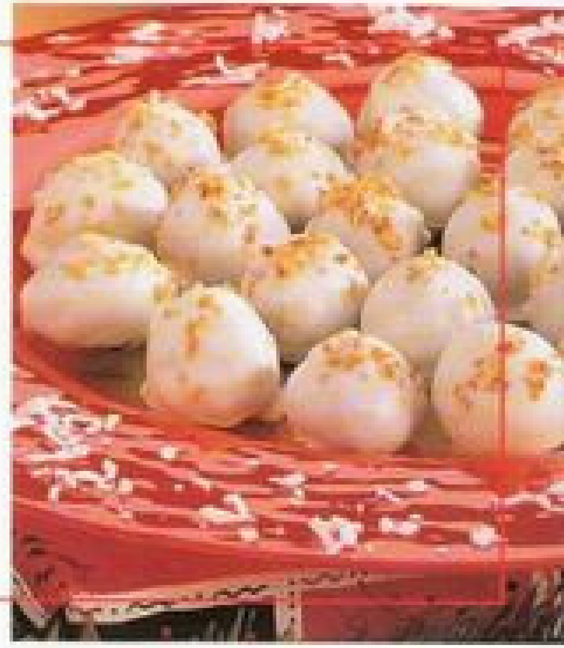
Editor's Note: This recipe was tested in an 850-watt microwave.



Toasted Coconut Truffles

"Ooh" and "mmmm" are common comments when folks taste these delectable bites. Toasted coconut in the coating makes the truffles especially tempting. I always include them in my Christmas gift containers. *—Beth Nagel West Lafayette, Indiana*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Sugar 'n' Spice Nuts

To tell the truth, I can't recall where this recipe came from. It's been a regular in my holiday baking, though, for many years. Between Thanksgiving and New Year's, I hand these out to almost everybody—even the mailman's been known to find a batch in the mailbox! *—Debbi Baker Green Springs, Ohio*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Toasted Coconut Truffles

4 cups (24 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened and cubed
3/4 cup sweetened condensed milk
3 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 teaspoons water
1 pound white candy coating
2 tablespoons flaked coconut, finely chopped and toasted

In a microwave or heavy saucepan, melt chocolate chips. Add the cream cheese, milk, vanilla and water; beat with a hand mixer until blended. Cover and refrigerate until easy to handle, about 1-1/2 hours. Shape into 1-in. balls and place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Loosely cover and refrigerate for 1-2 hours or until firm. In a microwave or heavy saucepan, melt candy coating, stirring often. Dip balls in coating; place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Sprinkle with coconut. Refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container. **Yield:** about 5-1/2 dozen.

Sugar 'n' Spice Nuts

3 cups lightly salted mixed nuts
1 egg white
1 tablespoon orange juice
2/3 cup sugar
1 tablespoon grated orange peel
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice



Place nuts in a large bowl. In a small bowl, beat egg white and orange juice with a fork until foamy. Add sugar, orange peel, cinnamon, ginger and allspice; mix well. Pour over nuts and stir to coat. Spread into an ungreased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan. Bake at 275°, stirring every 15 minutes, for 45-50 minutes or until nuts are crisp and lightly browned. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** 4 cups.

Fudge-Topped Brownies

If you love brownies and fudge, why not combine the two? Mix up a pan of these exquisite brownies for any holiday or special gathering...or just when you want to treat yourself to the ultimate dessert.

—Judy Olson
Whitecourt, Alberta

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

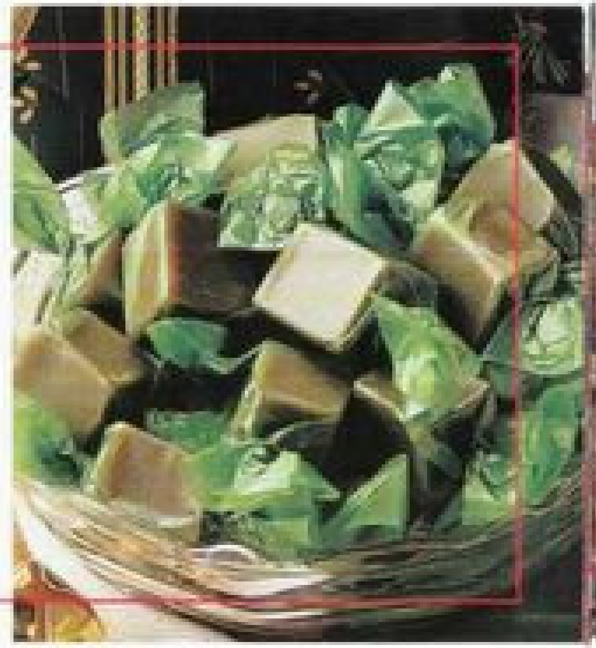


Creamy Caramels

I discovered this recipe in the newspaper several years ago and have made these soft, buttery caramels ever since. Everyone asks for the recipe once they have a taste. They are so much better than store-bought caramels.

—Marcie Wolfe
Williamsburg, Virginia

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Fudge-Topped Brownies

- 1 cup butter
- 4 squares (1 ounce *each*) unsweetened chocolate
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 eggs
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

TOPPING:

- 4-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 package (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 package (11-1/2 ounces) milk chocolate chips
- 1 jar (7 ounces) marshmallow creme
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups chopped walnuts

In a saucepan over low heat, melt butter and chocolate. Remove from heat. Blend in sugar and vanilla. Beat in eggs. Combine flour, baking powder and salt; add to chocolate mixture. Stir in nuts. Pour into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until top springs back when lightly touched. In a heavy saucepan, combine sugar, milk and butter; bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in chips, creme and vanilla; beat until smooth. Add nuts. Spread over warm brownies. Freeze until firm. Cut into 1-in. squares. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** about 10 dozen.

Creamy Caramels

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup dark corn syrup
- 1 cup butter
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

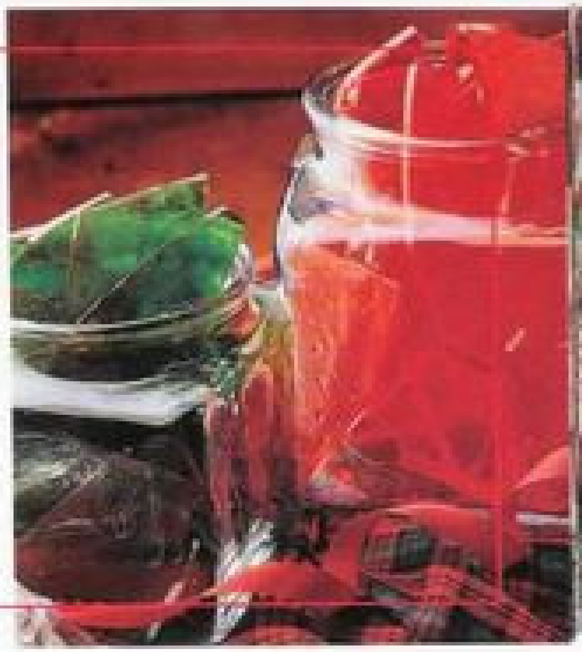
Line an 8-in. square pan with foil and butter the foil; set aside. Combine sugar, corn syrup and butter in a 3-qt. saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Boil slowly for 4 minutes without stirring. Remove from the heat and stir in milk. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook until candy thermometer reads 238° (soft-ball stage), stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and stir in vanilla. Pour into prepared pan. Cool. Remove from pan and cut into 1-in. squares. Wrap individually in waxed paper; twist ends. **Yield:** 64 pieces.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Christmas Hard Candy

When you make a batch of this beautiful jewel-toned candy, your whole house fills with wonderful scents of mint or cinnamon. My mom always makes this candy, and people request it every year. She puts it in clear jars with a holiday calico fabric on the lid. Now I've started making it, too. *—Jane Holman Moultrie, Georgia*

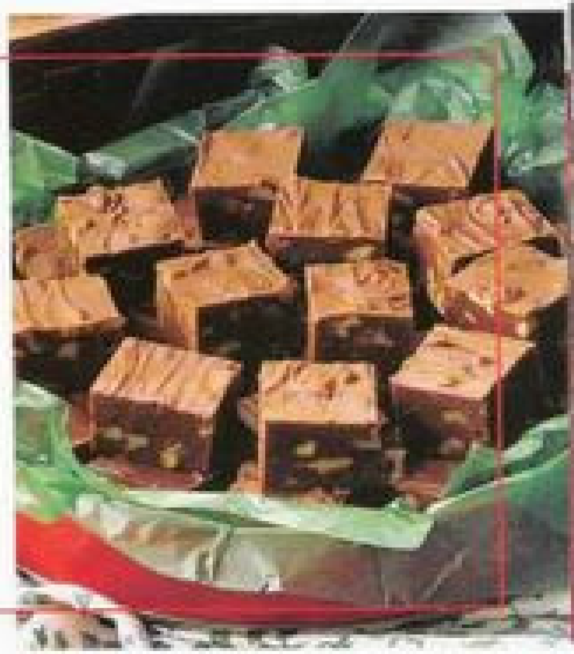
Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Three-Chocolate Fudge

I make this fudge at Christmastime to give to friends and neighbors. That tradition started years ago when I made more candy than my husband, three sons and I could eat, so we shared it. Now it's a tasty tradition. *—Betty Grantham Hanceville, Alabama*

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Christmas Hard Candy

3-1/2 cups sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1 cup water
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon oil *or* peppermint oil
1 teaspoon red *or* green food coloring

In a large heavy saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and water. Cook on medium-high heat until candy thermometer reads 300° (hard-crack stage), stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; stir in oil and food coloring, keeping face away from mixture as odor is very strong. Immediately pour onto an oiled cookie sheet. Cool; break into pieces. Store in airtight containers. **Yield:** about 2 pounds.

Editor's Note: Cinnamon oil and peppermint oil are available in cake-decorating and candy supply stores.

We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Three-Chocolate Fudge

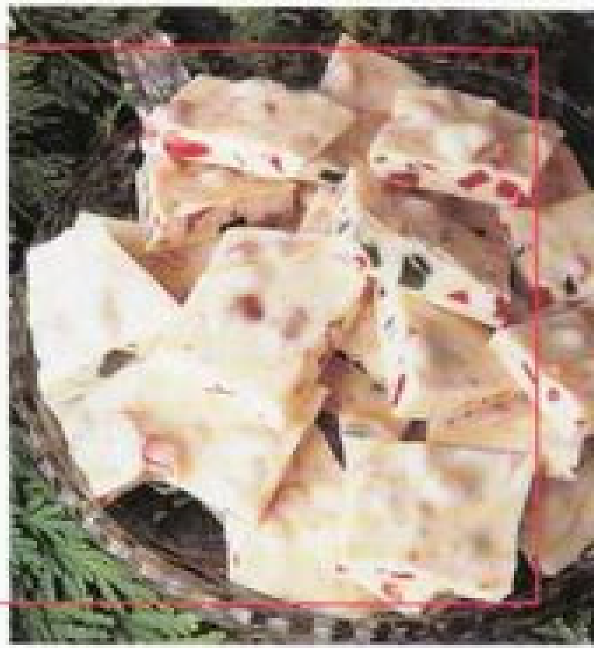
3-1/3 cups sugar
1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk
1 cup butter
1 cup packed brown sugar
32 large marshmallows, halved
2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
2 milk chocolate candy bars (7 ounces *each*), broken
2 squares (1 ounce *each*) semisweet baking chocolate, chopped
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups chopped pecans

In a large saucepan, combine first four ingredients. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to a rapid boil; boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat; stir in marshmallows until melted. Stir in chocolate chips until melted. Add chocolate bars and baking chocolate; stir until melted. Fold in vanilla and pecans; mix well. Pour into a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan. Chill until firm. Cut into squares. **Yield:** 5-1/2 pounds.

White Christmas Candy

During the holidays years ago, my husband brought this wonderful candy home from work. The co-worker who'd shared it graciously included the recipe...and I've been making it ever since. —*Carol Hammond*
Helena, Alabama

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Angel Food Candy

It was my dad who inspired me to first try making this candy. He remembered it from when he was a boy. The ultimate compliment was when he told me my version tasted even better!
—*Shelly Matthys*
New Richmond, Wisconsin

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



White Christmas Candy

- **2 pounds white candy coating, cut into small chunks**
- **1/2 pound crushed candy canes or crushed peppermint candies**

Melt candy coating over medium-low heat, stirring until smooth. Stir in the peppermint candy. Spread on waxed paper-lined baking sheets; refrigerate for 8-10 minutes. Break into small pieces; store in airtight containers. **Yield:** 2-1/2 pounds.



Angel Food Candy

- **1 cup sugar**
- **1 cup dark corn syrup**
- **1 tablespoon vinegar**
- **1 tablespoon baking soda**
- **1 pound chocolate candy coating, melted**

In a heavy saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and vinegar. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves. Cook without stirring until the temperature reaches 300° (hard crack stage) on a candy thermometer. Do not overcook. Remove from the heat and quickly stir in baking soda. Pour into a buttered 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Do not spread candy; mixture will not fill pan. When cool, break into bite-size pieces. Dip into melted chocolate; place on waxed paper until the chocolate is firm. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** 1-1/2 pounds.

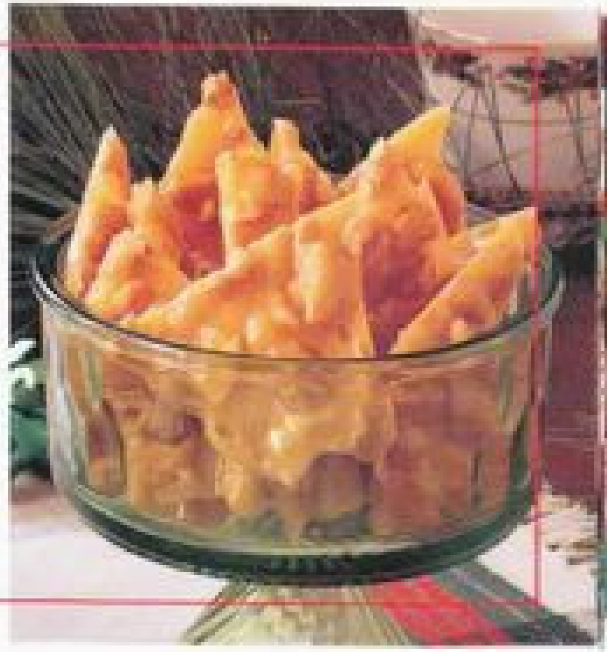
Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Cashew Crickle

Cashews add excellent flavor to this golden holiday brickle. It's a real treat to eat and to share.

—Kathy Kittell
Lenexa, Kansas

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Candy Bar Fudge

My manager at work, who knows I like to try new treat recipes, shared this one with me. I've made this chewy and chocolaty fudge many times since. Packed with nuts and caramel, it's like a candy bar. Everyone who's tried it loves it.

—Lois Zigarac
Rochester Hills, Michigan

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Cashew Crickle

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup corn syrup
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups salted cashews

In a large saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and water; bring to a boil, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved. Cook, without stirring, over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 300° (hard-crack stage). Remove from the heat; stir in butter, vanilla and baking soda. Add cashews. Pour into a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan. Cool; break into pieces. **Yield:** about 2 pounds.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.



Candy Bar Fudge

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/3 cup baking cocoa
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup milk
- 3-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 30 caramels, unwrapped
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 cups salted peanuts
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips



In a microwave-safe bowl, combine the butter, cocoa, brown sugar and milk. Microwave on high until mixture boils, about 3 minutes. Stir in confectioners' sugar and vanilla. Pour into a greased 8-in. square baking pan. In another microwave-safe bowl, heat caramels and water on high for 2 minutes or until melted. Stir in peanuts; spread over chocolate layer. Microwave chocolate chips on high for 1 minute or until melted; spread over caramel layer. Chill until firm. **Yield:** 2-3/4 pounds.

Editor's Note: This recipe was tested in a 700-watt microwave and using Hershey caramels.

Chocolate Mint Candy

It doesn't take long to stir up a batch of this dreamy mint candy. But it still has wonderful homemade goodness.

—Kendra Pedersen
Battle Ground, Washington

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Crunchy Peanut Bark

Cereal and peanuts add the crunch to these sweet and peanut-buttery treats you can make in no time. At Christmas, my sister and I add them to trays of homemade candies we give to the customers of the house-cleaning service we run. We're often asked for the recipe.

—Jan Thoele
Effingham, Illinois

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Chocolate Mint Candy

2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk, divided
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 ounces white candy coating
2 to 3 teaspoons peppermint extract
3 drops green food coloring

In a heavy saucepan, melt chocolate chips with 1 cup milk. Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla. Spread half into a waxed paper-lined 8-in. square pan; chill for 10 minutes or until firm. Meanwhile, in a heavy saucepan over low heat, cook and stir candy coating with remaining milk until coating is melted and mixture is smooth. Stir in peppermint extract and food coloring. Spread over bottom layer; chill for 10 minutes or until firm. Warm remaining chocolate mixture if necessary; spread over mint layer. Chill for 2 hours or until firm. Remove from pan; cut into 1-in. squares. **Yield:** about 2 pounds.

Crunchy Peanut Bark

2 pounds white candy coating
1 cup peanut butter
3 cups crisp rice cereal
2 cups dry roasted peanuts
2 cups miniature marshmallows

Place candy coating in a large microwave-safe bowl; microwave at 50% power until melted, about 5 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. Drop by heaping tablespoonfuls onto waxed paper or divide between two greased 9-in. square pans. **Yield:** 10 dozen.

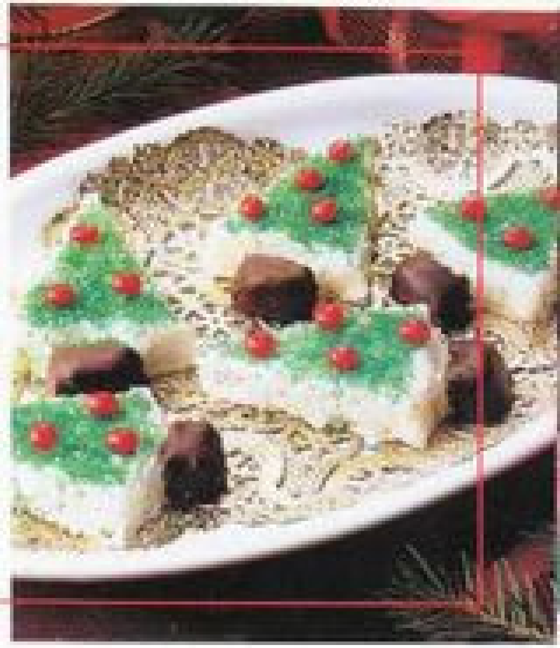


Coconut Yule Trees

People love these trees at Christmastime because they're so festive-looking and more fun than the standard holiday candy. If you like coconut, you'll love this recipe, too. I freeze the undecorated "trees" in an airtight container for up to a month.

—Michelle Retterer
Marysville, Ohio

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

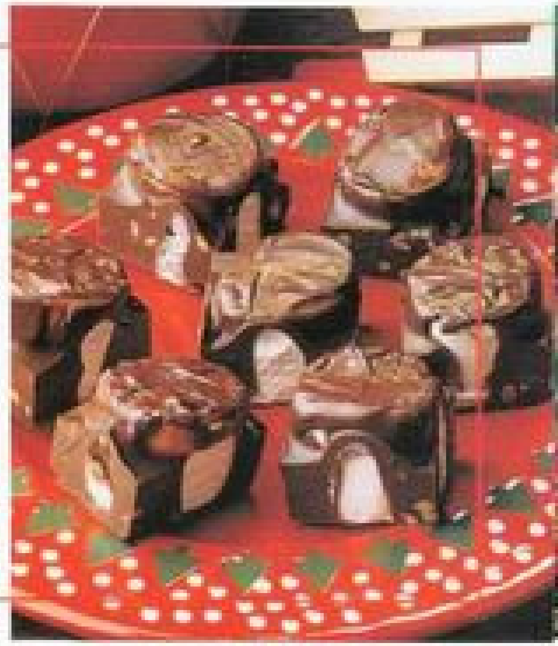


Marshmallow Puffs

With peanut butter, chocolate and marshmallows, these treats were very popular with our three children as they were growing up. Now I make them for our grandchildren. Because they're easy to make, they're perfect for the holidays when time is so precious.

—Dody Cagenello
Simsbury, Connecticut

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Coconut Yule Trees

3 cups flaked coconut
2 cups confectioners' sugar
1/4 cup butter, softened
1/4 cup half-and-half cream
1 teaspoon almond extract
2 to 4 ounces dark chocolate candy coating
Green sugar and red-hot candies



In a large bowl, combine the first five ingredients; mix well. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto a waxed paper-lined cookie sheet; chill for 1 hour. Shape into trees, return to cookie sheet. In a double boiler or microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate coating. Spoon over or dip trunks of trees and set on waxed paper to harden. Decorate tops of trees with green sugar and red-hots. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

Marshmallow Puffs

36 large marshmallows
1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup chunky peanut butter
2 tablespoons butter



Line a 9-in. square pan with foil; butter the foil. Arrange marshmallows in pan. In a double boiler or microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate chips, peanut butter and butter at 50% power. Pour and spread over the marshmallows. Chill completely. Cut between marshmallows. **Yield:** 3 dozen.

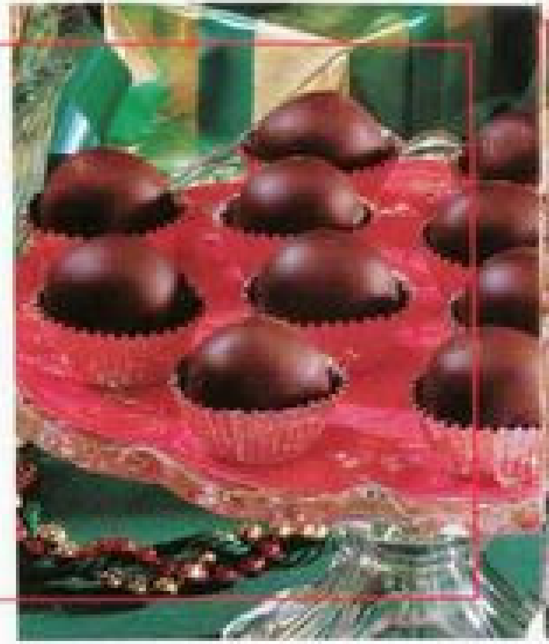
Editor's Note: This recipe was tested in a 700-watt microwave.

Chocolate-Covered Cherries

Each year, I have to plan on producing even more of these simple-to-make candies. They're the ones my husband likes best, and they're the first to disappear.

—Lori O'Brien
Milbank, South Dakota

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Old-Time Butter Crunch Candy

Both my children and my grandchildren say the season wouldn't be the same without the big tray of candies and cookies I prepare. This one's a popular part of that collection. We love the nutty pieces draped in chocolate.

—Mildred Duffy
Bella Vista, Arkansas

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Chocolate-Covered Cherries

1/2 cup butter, softened
2 cups marshmallow creme
Pinch salt
1 teaspoon almond extract
4 cups confectioners' sugar
1 jar (16 ounces) maraschino cherries, well drained
2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
2 tablespoons shortening



In a mixing bowl, cream butter. Add marshmallow creme, salt, extract and sugar; mix well. Knead into a large ball; chill for 1 hour. Roll into 1-in. balls and flatten into 2-in. circles. Wrap circles around cherries and carefully shape into balls. Place on a waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Cover loosely, and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight. Melt chocolate chips and shortening in a double boiler or microwave-safe bowl. Dip cherries into chocolate; place on waxed paper to harden. Refrigerate in a covered container 1-2 weeks before serving. **Yield:** about 4-1/2 dozen.

Old-Time Butter Crunch Candy

1 cup butter
1-1/4 cups sugar
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
2 tablespoons water
2 cups finely chopped toasted almonds
8 milk chocolate candy bars (1.55 ounces each)

Line a 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan with foil; set aside. Using part of the butter, grease the sides of a large heavy saucepan. Add remaining butter to saucepan; melt over low heat. Add sugar, corn syrup and water. Cook and stir over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 300° (hard-crack stage). Remove from the heat and stir in almonds. Quickly pour into the prepared pan, spreading to cover bottom of pan. Cool completely. Carefully invert pan to remove candy in one piece; remove foil. Melt half of the chocolate in a double boiler or microwave-safe bowl; spread over top of candy. Let cool. Turn candy over and repeat with remaining chocolate; cool. Break into 2-in. pieces. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** about 2 pounds.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Homemade Marshmallows

My husband Dale's grandmother fixed these fluffy marshmallows for special occasions. Since she had no electric mixer, beating the ingredients by hand for 30 minutes was a labor of love. Now, Dale makes them. They're delicious!

—Nancy Shields
Hillsdale, Michigan

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars

My daughter won first place in a contest with this candy, which I make at Christmastime. It melts in your mouth!

—Mary Esther Holloway
Bowerston, Ohio

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Homemade Marshmallows

2 cups cold water, *divided*
4 envelopes unflavored gelatin
4 cups sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Confectioners' sugar
Toasted flaked coconut *or* ground pecans, optional

In a large mixing bowl, combine 3/4 cup of water and gelatin; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan over medium heat, combine sugar, salt and remaining water. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Cover and continue cooking for 3 minutes to dissolve any sugar crystals. Uncover and cook on medium-high heat, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 270° (soft-crack stage). Remove from the heat and gradually add to gelatin. Beat on low speed for 3 minutes. Add vanilla; beat on medium for 10 minutes. Spread mixture into a 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. pan sprinkled with confectioners' sugar. Cover and cool at room temperature for 6 hours or overnight. Cut into 1-in. squares; roll in coconut or nuts if desired. Store in airtight containers in a cool dry place. **Yield:** about 8 dozen.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars

3 cups sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup water
1 jar (18 ounces) creamy peanut butter, melted
1-1/2 pounds milk chocolate candy coating

In a large heavy saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and water. Cook and stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved; bring to a full rolling boil. Boil, stirring constantly, until a candy thermometer reads 290° (soft-crack stage). Meanwhile, place melted peanut butter in a large greased heatproof bowl. Pour hot syrup over peanut butter; stir quickly until blended. Pour onto a well-buttered baking sheet; cover with a piece of buttered waxed paper. Roll mixture into a 14-in. x 12-in. rectangle. While warm, cut into 1-1/2-in. x 1-in. bars using a buttered pizza cutter or knife. Cool completely. Melt candy coating; dip bars and place on waxed paper to harden. **Yield:** 6 dozen.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Chocolate Nut Fudge Rolls

The recipe for these rich, chocolaty nut rolls comes from a handwritten cookbook full of memorable holiday treats—my mother compiled it for me the last Christmas I lived at home.

—Connie Korbel
Lakeport, California

Taste of Home's
Cookies & Candies



Butter Mints

These creamy mints are smooth as silk and melt in your mouth! As a wife and mother, I treasure treats like these that come together quickly but taste terrific.

—Bev Schloneger
Dalton, Ohio

Taste of Home's
Cookies & Candies



Chocolate Nut Fudge Rolls

2 tablespoons butter
1 square (1 ounce) unsweetened chocolate
3 cups sugar
1 cup milk
1/4 cup honey
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vinegar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
1 tablespoon shortening
3 cups chopped walnuts

In a large heavy saucepan, melt butter and chocolate over low heat. Add sugar, milk, honey and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Cover and continue to boil for 2 minutes. Uncover and cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 240° (soft-ball stage). Remove from the heat; stir in vinegar. Let cool to 110°. Add vanilla; beat vigorously by hand until mixture thickens and loses its gloss, about 8-10 minutes. Turn onto a buttered baking sheet. Let stand until cool enough to handle. Knead for 2-3 minutes. Shape into 4-in. x 1-1/2-in. rolls. Place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets; chill for 3-4 hours. Melt chocolate chips and shortening in a double boiler or microwave-safe bowl. Dip the rolls in chocolate; roll in nuts. Place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets and chill until firm. Cut into 1/4-in. slices. **Yield:** about 2-1/4 pounds.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Butter Mints

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 package (1 pound) confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon half-and-half cream *or* milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
Red and green paste *or* liquid food coloring, optional

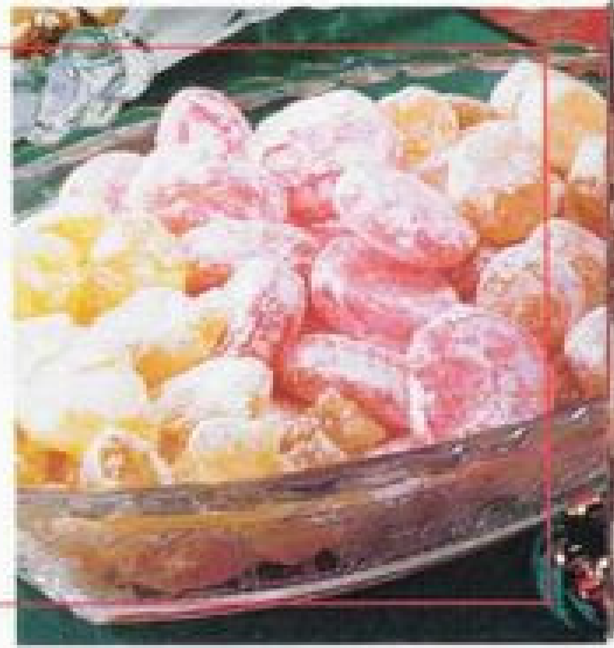
In a mixing bowl, cream the butter. Gradually add sugar, cream and extracts; beat on medium speed for 3-4 minutes. If desired, divide dough into portions and knead in food coloring. Form into balls by teaspoonfuls; flatten into patties or roll between two pieces of waxed paper to 1/8-in. thickness and cut into desired shapes. Cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** about 8 dozen.

Hard Candy

Every evening for a week in December, my husband and I mix up several batches of this soothing candy. When we finish, we have all our favorite flavors and a rainbow of colors. The pieces look lovely in a clear candy dish or jar.

—Virginia Sue Barlow
Farmer City, Illinois

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies

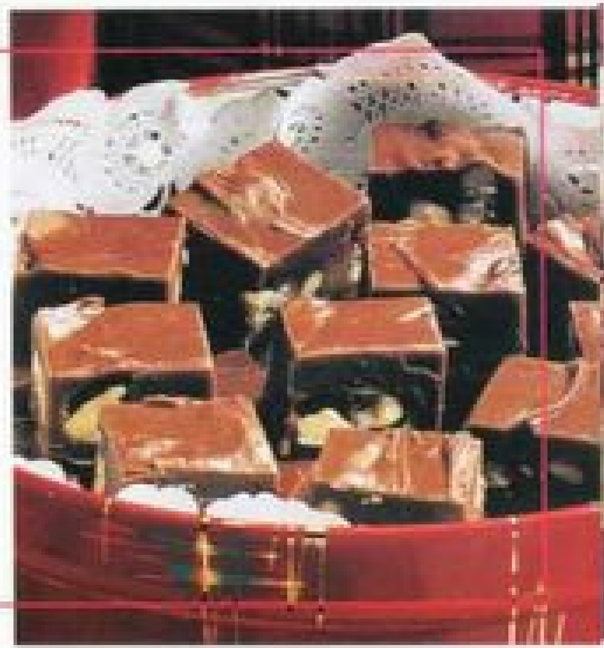


Microwave Mint Fudge

My family loves chocolate and mint, so I combined those favorite flavors in this quick fudge recipe.

—Helen Brust
Union Mills, Indiana

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Hard Candy

5 to 6 cups confectioners' sugar
2 cups sugar
3/4 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup water
1 to 2 teaspoons anise, lemon or orange extract
Red, yellow or orange liquid food coloring, optional

Fill a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan with confectioners' sugar to a depth of 1/2 in. Using the handle of a wooden spoon, make a continuous curved-line indentation in the sugar; set pan aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Cover and continue cooking for 3 minutes to dissolve any sugar crystals. Uncover and cook on medium-high heat, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 300° (hard-crack stage). Remove from the heat; stir in extract and food coloring if desired (keep face away from mixture because aroma is very strong). Carefully pour into a glass measuring cup. Working quickly, pour into prepared indentation in pan. Cover candy with confectioners' sugar. When candy is cool enough to handle, cut into pieces with a scissors. Store in a covered container. **Yield:** 3/4 pound.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Microwave Mint Fudge

1-1/2 cups sugar
1 can (5 ounces) evaporated milk
1/4 cup butter
5 cups miniature marshmallows
1 package (10 ounces) mint chocolate chips
1 packet (1 ounce) pre-melted baking chocolate
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract

In a 2-qt. microwave-safe bowl, combine sugar, milk and butter. Microwave on high until mixture comes to a full rolling boil, stirring after 2-1/2 minutes. Cook 5 minutes more, stirring after 3 minutes. Add marshmallows; stir until melted. Stir in chips and chocolate until smooth. Stir in nuts and extracts. Immediately pour into a greased 11-in. x 7-in. x 2-in. pan. Chill until firm. Cut into squares. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 2-1/4 pounds.

Editor's Note: This recipe was tested using a 700-watt microwave.

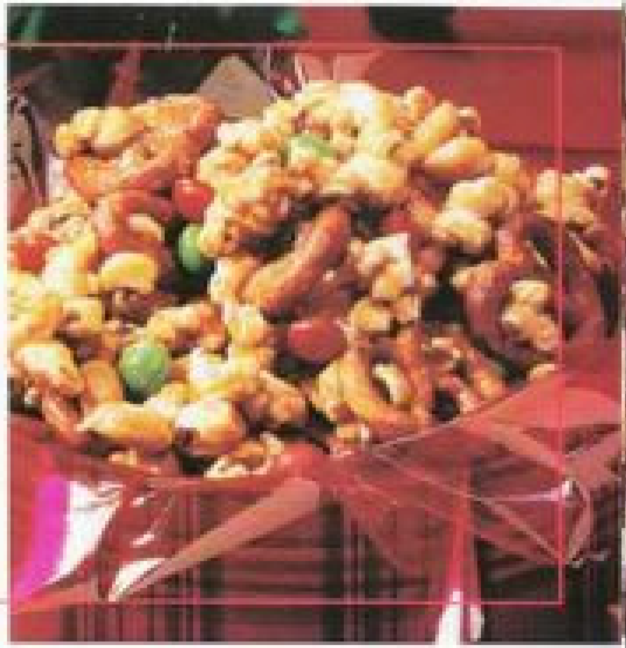
If mint chips are not available, place 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips and 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract in a plastic bag; seal and toss to coat. Allow chips to stand for 24-48 hours.

Deluxe Caramel Corn

A batch of this colorful crunchy snack mix is perfect for gift-giving or serving at a holiday party.

—Lisa Claas
Watertown, Wisconsin

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Sesame Toffee

This recipe originally came from a friend in Canada. The sesame seeds add a crispy texture and unique flavor to the toffee. It makes a great gift that friends and family are always happy to receive!

—Idalene Adams
Brainerd, Minnesota

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Deluxe Caramel Corn

- 4 quarts plain popped popcorn
- 5 cups mini pretzel twists
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup dark corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup salted peanuts
- 2 cups non-chocolate candy (gumdrops, Skittles, etc.)

Place popcorn and pretzels in a large bowl; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine sugar, butter, corn syrup and salt; cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture comes to a rolling boil. Cook and stir until candy thermometer reads 238° (soft-ball stage). Remove from the heat; stir in baking soda. Quickly pour over popcorn and mix thoroughly; stir in peanuts. Turn into two greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pans. Bake at 200° for 20 minutes; stir. Bake 25 minutes more. Remove from the oven; add candy and mix well. Remove from pans and place on waxed paper to cool. Break into clusters. Store in airtight containers or plastic bags. **Yield:** 6-1/2 quarts.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Sesame Toffee

- 3/4 cup sesame seeds, toasted, *divided*
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda

Evenly spread half of the sesame seeds in a well-greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan; set aside. In a heavy 2-1/2-qt. saucepan, melt butter. Add sugars and water; bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook and stir until candy thermometer reads 290° (soft-crack stage). Remove from the heat and stir in the baking soda. Pour over sesame seeds in pan. Sprinkle with remaining sesame seeds; gently press with a spatula. Cool. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** about 1-1/4 pounds.

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Truffle Cups

When I serve this elegant confection for the holidays, it never fails to draw compliments. Delightfully tempting, the cups are a fun, fluffy variation on traditional truffles.

—Katie Dowler
Birch Tree, Missouri

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Sugarless Licorice Stars

You can enjoy this candy even if you are on a restricted diet since it's sugar-free. Use small seasonal cutters to make shapes everyone will be sweet on.

—Margaret Richardson
Spring Grove, Illinois

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Truffle Cups

- 1 package (11-1/2 ounces) milk chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 pound white candy coating, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

In a double boiler or microwave, melt chips and shortening. Stir until smooth; cool for 5 minutes. With a narrow pastry brush, "paint" the chocolate mixture on the inside of 1-in. foil candy cups. Place on a tray and refrigerate until firm, about 45 minutes. Remove about 12 cups at a time from the refrigerator; remove and discard foil cups. Return chocolate cups to the refrigerator. For filling, melt candy coating and cream; stir until smooth. Transfer to a mixing bowl; cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken. Beat filling for 1-2 minutes or until light and fluffy. Use a pastry star tube or spoon to fill the chocolate cups. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 5 dozen.

Sugarless Licorice Stars

- 2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- 4 cups diet cherry soda, *divided*
- 3 packages (.3 ounce *each*) sugar-free cherry gelatin
- 2 teaspoons anise flavoring



In a large bowl, soften gelatin in 1/2 cup soda. In a small saucepan, bring remaining soda to a boil. Remove from the heat; add to gelatin mixture and mix well. Stir in flavored gelatin until dissolved. Add anise; mix well. If necessary, skim foam. Pour into a 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. pan. Chill until firm. Use small star-shaped or other holiday cutters or cut into 1-in. squares. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 7-9 dozen.

Napoleon Cremes

For the annual Christmas open house we host, I set out a buffet with lots of food and candies like these lovely layered treats. They're so creamy...and with a green pistachio layer of pudding peeking out, they're very merry. *—Gloria Jesswein*
Niles, Michigan

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Dandy Caramel Candies

I've made these morsels almost every Christmas for over 35 years. Everyone enjoys the chewy treats. *—Marlene Pierce*
Welch, Texas

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Napoleon Cremes

1 cup butter, softened, *divided*
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup baking cocoa
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 cups finely crushed graham cracker crumbs (about 32 squares)
1 cup flaked coconut
3 tablespoons milk
1 package (3.4 ounces) instant pistachio *or* lemon pudding mix
2 cups confectioners' sugar

TOPPING:
1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
3 tablespoons butter

In a double boiler, combine 1/2 cup butter, sugar, cocoa and vanilla; cook and stir until butter is melted. Add egg; cook and stir until mixture thickens, about 5 minutes. Stir in crumbs and coconut. Press into a greased 9-in. square baking pan. In a mixing bowl, cream remaining butter. Add milk, pudding mix and confectioners' sugar; beat until fluffy. Spread over crust. Refrigerate until firm, 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Melt chocolate chips and butter; cool. Spread over pudding layer. Chill. Cut into bars. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Dandy Caramel Candies

1 cup sugar
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup dark corn syrup
1 cup butter
2 cups heavy whipping cream
3-3/4 cups chopped pecans (about 1 pound)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Dark *or* milk chocolate candy coating, melted

In a heavy saucepan, combine sugars, corn syrup, butter and cream. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Cook over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 248° (firm-ball stage). Remove from heat; stir in pecans and vanilla. Quickly spread into a buttered 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Cool. Cut into 1-in. squares. Place squares on waxed paper-lined baking sheets; chill thoroughly. Dip each candy into melted candy coating. Return to refrigerator to harden. **Yield:** about 8 dozen.

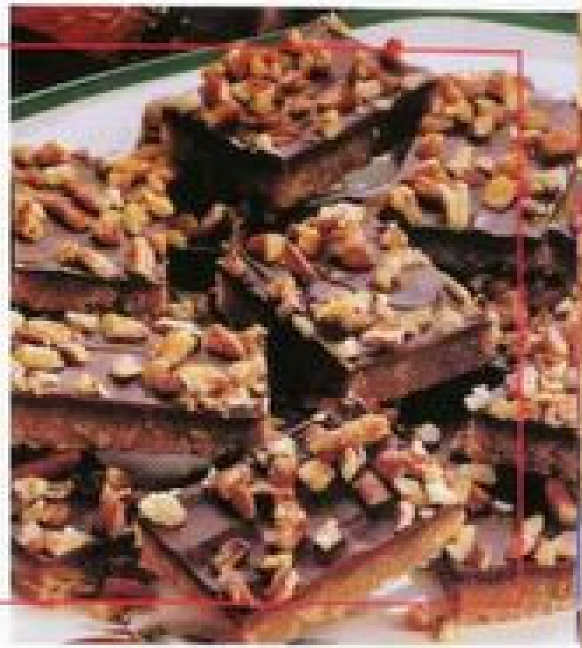
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Chocolate Toffee Crunchies

From the buttery crust to the golden toffee, melted chocolate and chopped pecans, these bars are filled with Noel flavor.

—Joni Crans
Woodhull, New York

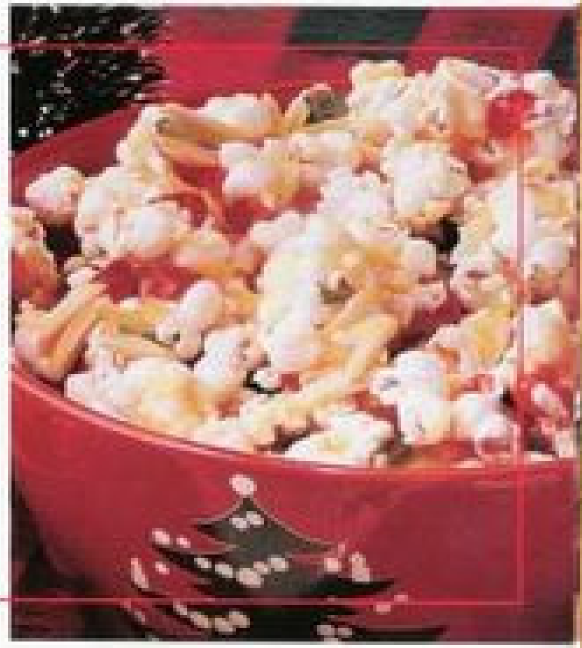
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Popcorn Almond Brittle

For a crunchy snack that suits the season, try this one. I've been stirring up batches of the distinctive brittle since 1975. With popcorn, almonds and candied cherries tossed together in a sweet crisp coating, it's a festive favorite we enjoy every year. *—Ruth Peterson*
Jenison, Michigan

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Chocolate Toffee Crunchies

- 2 cups vanilla wafer crumbs
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, melted

TOPPING:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans

Combine crumbs, brown sugar and butter. Press into an ungreased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. In a saucepan, bring butter and brown sugar to a boil over medium heat; boil and stir for 1 minute. Pour evenly over crust. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. Remove from oven; let stand for 2 minutes. Sprinkle with chocolate chips; let stand until chocolate is melted. Spread evenly over top; sprinkle with pecans. Cool completely before cutting. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Popcorn Almond Brittle

- 6 cups popped popcorn
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 1/2 cup *each* red and green candied cherries, chopped
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup corn syrup
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan, combine popcorn, almonds and cherries. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. Turn oven off and keep mixture warm in the oven. Meanwhile, in a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, corn syrup, water and salt; cook and stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved. Cook over medium heat, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 305°-310° (hard-crack stage). Remove from the heat; stir in butter and vanilla. Immediately pour over popcorn mixture; toss gently. Spread onto a greased baking sheet. When cool, break into small pieces. **Yield:** about 1-1/2 pounds.

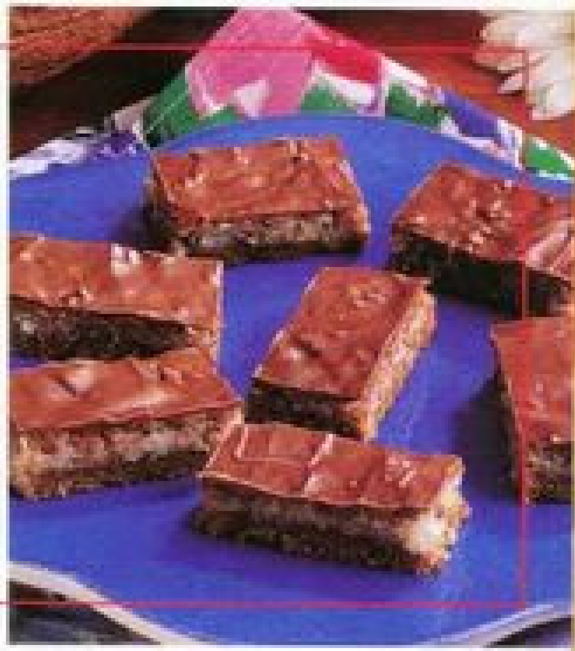
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Chocolate Coconut Bars

With a middle layer of coconut, these sweet chocolaty treats taste similar to a Mounds candy bar! If time is short, don't wait for the bars to cool—just lay on several milk chocolate bars right after you take the pan from the oven and spread them as they melt.

—Sharon Skildum
Maple Grove, Minnesota

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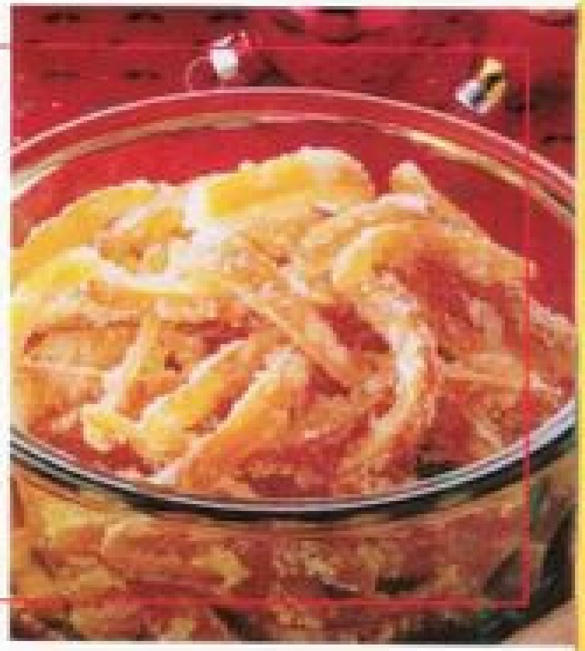


Sugary Orange Peel

These sugar-coated citrus strips attract lots of compliments whenever I set them out at parties.

—Alice Schmidlin
Banks, Oregon

Taste of Home's Cookies & Candies



Chocolate Coconut Bars

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups flaked coconut
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 plain chocolate candy bar (7 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter

Combine the crumbs, butter and sugar. Press into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine coconut, milk and pecans; spread over the crust. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes; cool completely. In a small saucepan, melt candy bar and peanut butter over low heat; spread over bars. Cool until set. **Yield:** about 3 dozen.



Sugary Orange Peel

- 4 medium navel oranges
- 2 to 3 cups sugar, *divided*
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips, optional
- 2 teaspoons shortening, optional

With a knife, score the peel from each orange into quarters. With fingers, remove peel with white pith attached. Place peel in a saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Boil, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Drain and repeat twice. Meanwhile, in another saucepan, combine 1 cup of sugar, water and salt. Bring to a boil; boil and stir for 2 minutes or until sugar is dissolved. Drain peel and add to syrup. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 50-60 minutes or until syrup is almost all absorbed, stirring occasionally. (Watch carefully to prevent scorching.) Drain any remaining syrup. Cool orange peel in a single layer on a foil-lined baking sheet for 1 hour. Cut into 1/8-in. to 1/4-in. strips. Sprinkle remaining sugar on an ungreased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan. Sprinkle strips over sugar; toss to coat. Let stand for 8 hours or overnight, tossing occasionally. If desired, melt chocolate chips and shortening. Dip one end of each orange strip into chocolate; let stand on waxed paper until chocolate hardens. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks. **Yield:** 5 cups.

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